



NEW YEAR HONOUR RECOGNITION FOR LOTS OF HARD WORK



Camilla Phillips MBE, centre, with Hope Centre colleagues

SPORT stars and community heroes from across Dudley borough were recognised in the Queen's New Year's Honours List.

Pamela Preston, of Dudley, aged 66, has been awarded a British Empire Medal for her services to The Samaritans over the past nine years.

Mrs Preston, who is also the deputy regional director for Samaritans, said: "I would like to accept this on behalf of all the volunteers and the work they do."

Halesowen cycling star Helen Scott has been honoured with an MBE for her success in Rio and services to cycling.

The 26-year-old stormed to victory in the B 1,000 metres time trial along with partner Sophie Thornhill. The pair set a Paralympic

record time to take GB's sixth gold of the Games.

Camilla Phillips from Halesowen has been awarded an MBE for services to the community through The Hope Centre in Halesowen. She has dedicated herself to helping the residents of Halesowen, in particular the Highfields estate.

Following the closure of the Lighthouse project the 56-year-old was working on in 2009, she decided to volunteer full-time to keep the service going for the community, using the former Lighthouse building to form the Hope Centre in Andrew Road.

She said: "I was really shocked when I first found out - I thought someone was playing a joke on me. It's a huge honour."

"I may be the one receiving the award but it's really a team effort."

Dr David Hegarty, chairman of Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group has been awarded an MBE for services to primary care.

Dr Hegarty, also a partner at Wychbury Medical Practice in Stourbridge, said: "I believe this honour is attributable to the many committed people who I have had the pleasure of working with over the last 26 years."

Ian Powell, of Sedgley, former chairman of accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers has been made a Knights Batchelor. He joined the firm in 1977 straight from Wolverhampton Polytechnic. He led PwC through the financial crisis and helped it expand.

HOSPITAL

Record numbers flocking to A&E

MORE than 600 patients have been attending the accident and emergency department at Russells Hall Hospital every day over the Christmas and New Year period.

The number arriving by ambulance is up 10 per cent on the same period a year ago.

The 'unprecedented' demand has heaped pressure on staff and left the hospital struggling to cope. Bosses are braced for an even busier time ahead as temperatures plummet.

The surge has prompted a desperate plea for people to only go to the hospital if they have a serious condition. It has also led to increased waiting times in A&E, with the hospital's four-hour performance, the national NHS target, taking a hit.

RETAIL

Sainsbury's checks out of Merry Hill

AFTER serving customers for more than 27 years, Sainsbury's at Merry Hill has shut its doors for the final time, with nearly 200 staff losing their jobs.

The tills are ringing no more and many of the shelves were stripped bare on the final day, Thursday, as customers and staff spoke of their sadness.

Sainsbury's decision to pull out of the shopping centre, where it has had a presence since October 1989, was blamed on the store 'underperforming'. It resulted in the loss of 193 jobs.

BUILDING

Work starts on £6m home for the elderly

WORK is starting on the construction of a £6 million care home in Rowley Regis.

The project is part of a link-up between Sandwell Community Caring Trust and Sandwell Council to provide modern facilities for older people.

The new care home is being built on the site of Knowle House. When it is completed, the staff and residents from Grafton Lodge in Grafton Road, Oldbury, will transfer to the building.

Residents from Fountain Court in Mill-pool Way in Bearwood will also be moved into the up-to-date facilities at the Rowley Regis site.

INSIDE

SQUIDS IN AT THE CHIPPY



PAGE 9

Parking wrangle drives homeowner round the bend

BOLLARDS BLOCK NEW DRIVEWAY

PARKING wars in a Black Country street are driving one man up the wall after he came home from work to find bollards blocking his new £5,000 drive.

Nigel Serrell splashed out on transforming his back garden into a driveway, to try and avoid parking rows with neighbours, only for a housing association to put up bollards blocking access to his new block-paved driveway.

The salesman couldn't believe it when he returned to his home of 18 years on Halesowen Street in Rowley Regis, to find the barrier posts, complete with a sign declaring 'private property', had been installed on the land that provides access to his drive.

Mr Serrell, aged 55, also claims his car was damaged in April last year whilst parked on the street at the back of the properties. Following that incident he went to the police, who advised him to create a secure parking space in his garden.

Precaution

He also installed CCTV cameras as an extra precaution.

While he himself is not a Midland Heart tenant, Mr Serrell says he kept in contact with the housing association throughout his work as he was aware that they owned the surrounding properties.

He says that they advised him that there would not be an issue because the road is not adopted.

However, a neighbour subsequently claimed she owns the land at the rear of his house leading to his new drive.

Mr Serrell made the shock discovery of the bollards when he returned from his job in marketing and sales at a painter and decorator business.

He said: "It was on July 31, I remember that day clearly. I drove back from work

Report by Judith Hawkins

and there they were. I had no notification at all. They waited until I was at work. I've seen on my camera that it was at about 10am they did it. They knew full well I'd be out all day. I thought 'what the hell's going on here?'

Adding to his problems, a dilapidated and untaxed car with a puncture has also been dumped in front of the bollards.

Mr Serrell said: "I have lived here for 16 years and never before had any problem. I'm not demanding the earth. I just want to get access on to my own property."

Mr Serrell said that he has been in regular contact with Midland Heart, ward councillors and Halesowen and Rowley Regis MP James Morris.

Director of Housing Management at Midland Heart, Nigel Columbello said: "We have been working locally with residents for some time to understand and resolve the complex issues around parking and access via land owned by Midland Heart, which is designated for use by Midland Heart customers. These discussions are still on-going in order to find a fair solution for everyone involved."



Blocked - bollards and a car obstructs Nigel Serrell's new drive in a dispute over access

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Addict threatened to Taser his mother

A DRUG addict who threatened to Taser his mother is starting a five-year prison sentence.
Richard Swift trashed his mother Gillian's home in Cobham Road, Halesowen.
The 25-year-old defendant ripped a bag containing his car keys from her with such force that she was left with a two-inch friction burn across her chest, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.
Police arriving at the scene in Halesowen had to swerve to avoid a crash Swift sped away from the cul-de-sac. But his escape was halted when a tyre on his vehicle was burst by a police stinger laid in the vehicle's path by officers.
Prosecutor Walter Bealby said there had been

an argument between mother and son in which Richard Swift had threatened her with the electro-shock stun weapon, which was disguised as a torch. "He said 'Don't make me Taser you'," said Mr Bealby.
At the time of the incident on May 16, 2015, the defendant was spending £40-a-day on cannabis and up to £300-a-week on cocaine.
He had been in possession of the Taser weapon for some time. He later said it was for personal protection in case he fell into debt to a violent drug dealer.
Police confirmed it was a working stun weapon. Mr Simon Rippon, defending, told the court that

his client had made a grave mistake and Richard Swift had described his mother 'as the most important person in his life'.
"He is a young man with a good work record who is loved, but has made a grave mistake at a time of serious personal upset. The circumstances were regrettable," said Mr Rippon.
"He was suffering from a depressive illness for which his use of illicit drugs was wholly inappropriate."
Swift's mother urged the court not to jail her son. But Richard Swift, of Meadow Lane, Newcastle-under-Lyme, was sent to jail for five years after pleading guilty to possession of a disguised firearm.

Glassboys face fine over Cup match flare

STOURBRIDGE FC could be facing a fine after a flare was thrown onto the pitch during the FA Cup win over Northampton Town.

The Glassboys have been reported to the Football Association after the flare was thrown during celebrations following Jack Duggan's winning goal.
It brings a sour note to what was one of the biggest wins in the club's history and secured them a place in the third round of the FA Cup for the first time.

Stourbridge chairman Andy Pountney warned any fans who bring flares to the War Memorial Ground in future will be banned. The club has previously been warned about flares and smoke bombs.

A statement from Mr Poutney on the club website said: "Bringing any pyrotechnic device into a football stadium in the UK is a criminal offence; this is clearly stated in our Ground Regulations document."

"Sadly, we have seen similar incidents of this nature occur before. Following each of these, we were warned about our future conduct by the FA, but fortunately escaped any further action at the time."

Implications

"Despite previous warnings to supporters, the actions of one individual could have implications for the whole of the football club, and how the FA will decide on this occasion we don't know. We can assure you that if any other supporter lets a flare off at any of our games going forward they will be banned indefinitely."

"We can also assure you that if we find out who the individual was that let the flare off on December 13 they will also be treated in the same manner."

"It's hard enough running the club without having to deal with this stupidity, so please just come along, have a great day and don't ruin it for everyone else."

The Glassboys netted £27,000 in prize money for getting through to the third round and having to give some of it back in the form of a fine would be a crushing blow.

Stour take on Wycombe Wanderers in the next round on Saturday. A win against the League One club would see the Glassboys receive a further windfall of more than £70,000.

● Ideal warm-up – page 40

Benefactor boosts hospice appeal



Halesowen businessman Dave Berry took part in the John O'Groats to Land's End fundraising challenge

THE Mary Stevens Hospice has been surprised by an extra £10,000 donation from a benevolent businessman, who embarked upon a year of fundraising.

Dave Berry decided he would collect the money for 'A Year of Celebrations' to simultaneously commemorate his 80th birthday, the 50th anniversary of his company – Berry's Fuelling Technologies – and the 25th anniversary of the Mary Stevens Hospice.

The Halesowen businessman

took part in a John O'Groats to Land's End challenge in August, driving the length of the country and stopping off to collect donations from numerous colleagues and business partners he has worked with since starting his company in 1966.

A devoted fundraiser for the Stourbridge hospice, this latest effort by Dave saw his total collected for the hospice surpass £40,000 and he then decided to make it up to £50,000.

Charlotte Schofield, head of fundraising at the hospice, said: "Dave had already contributed so much to this hospice and our ability to look after people. When he called a meeting with us, we obviously went in already full of gratitude. When he pulled out a cheque for £10,000, we were stunned."

The donation couldn't be better timed, as the hospice has launched its largest fundraising campaign, to secure £3 million to refurbish the day services unit.

Fireworks ban petition signed by thousands

MORE than 3,300 people in the Black Country and Staffordshire have backed a petition calling on the Government to ban the sale of fireworks to the public.

The petition, which has been signed by about 150,000 people across the country, wants only organised displays to be approved to help prevent injuries and protect animals.

But in a response, the Government said it had no plans to limit the sale and use of fireworks any further.

In the run-up to the new year celebrations, which saw the sky set alight, there was a rush to sign the petition.

Across the region, 560 in Dudley and Wyre Forest backed the campaign with 500 signing their support in Walsall. There were 401 supporters in Wolverhampton, 270 in West Bromwich, 198 in Halesowen and Rowley Regis, 180 in Stourbridge and 99 in Warley.

More than a thousand people signed the petition in Staffordshire, including 281 in South Staffordshire.

Despite the tens of thousands of responses nationwide, the matter will not be debated in Parliament, as it was previously discussed in June.

Mike Old, who created the petition, wrote: "Every year people are hurt, burnt, maimed and even lose their lives through accidents involving fireworks. "Every year people are terrorised by the misuse of fireworks. Every year animals are hurt and traumatised by fireworks."

A Government spokesman said only an anti-social minority used fireworks dangerously and inconsiderately.

Merry Hill Tiger store 'to close'

A GIFT and gadget shop at the Merry Hill centre is closing down, according to retail bosses.

Danish retailer Tiger, which came to Merry Hill in spring 2014, sells its own branded and designed products which range from kitchen gadgets and homeware to stationery, children's toys and hobby items.

Merry Hill tweeted: "We're disappointed to hear that Tiger is closing down. This is a commercial decision taken by Tiger. We wish their staff well."

A member of staff at Tiger said it would close on Wednesday, January 11, but declined to comment further.

This latest store closure follows the recent shutdowns of both Sainsbury's and BHS at the Brierley Hill mega-mall.

Former scrap yard on sale for £250k

A FORMER scrap yard site between Lye and Quarry Bank has been put on the market for £250,000.

The one acre site, on Saltbrook Road, comprises of a partly surfaced overgrown yard. Dudley-based property experts Sellers are selling it.

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Charges for burials set to increase in borough

THE cost of dying will increase across Dudley from the new year – with burial and cremation charges set to rise by almost 10 per cent.

It will cost £975 to bury an adult – a £72 rise – under the authority's new bereavement charges for 2017. A child burial will rise £14 to £194.

An adult cremation will increase from £752 to £812, with cremations for children rising by £7 to £97.

The burial or cremation of a still-born baby, or a baby aged under one month, will remain free.

Dudley Council leader Pete Lowe admitted last year that funeral costs were expected to rise as the authority battles to meet its target of saving £25 million over the next three years.

The cost of memorials in cemeteries will increase by £20 to £276. A memorial on a baby's grave will now cost an extra £5 at £77. The council is aiming to make an extra half a million from bereavement services up to 2020.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, for planning and economic development, said: "We have already invested £1million to upgrade cremation facilities at Gornal Wood Crematorium and last year we opened a new cemetery in Dudley.

"The council will also need to spend in the region of £800,000 to upgrade facilities at Stourbridge Crematorium and we have a legal responsibility to take on the maintenance of closed churchyards. We have to look at ways of funding these improvements in such an essential service at such a difficult time for people."

3,000 sign leisure centres petition

PROTESTERS have reached a milestone in their petition against the closure of three leisure centres in the Dudley borough.

More than 3,000 signatures have been gained on paper and e-petitions by the Save Our Leisure Centres group. It means that the group could now push for a full council debate on the matter.

Dudley Council wants to demolish Halesowen Leisure Centre, Dudley Leisure Centre and The Crystal Leisure Centre, in Stourbridge, and then build two new facilities.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said it was likely to be another three years before plans came to fruition and that the public would be consulted 'at the appropriate time'.

Nativity proves real family affair

A NATIVITY at a Cradley church was a real family affair.

James and Becky Brookes and their seven-week-old son Samuel took on the roles of Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus at St Peter's Church.

Divided loyalties for footy-mad twins



Twins Max and Tom, aged five

FOR friends and family, recognising identical twins Tom and Max Donnelly can be tough. But there is one thing that tells them apart – their love for different football teams.

The boys celebrated their fifth birthdays on Christmas Eve. And the football-mad siblings' divided loyalties meant their parents Karl and Kate had to buy different replica kits – a Wolves strip for Tom and a Villa one for Max. Their cake was a specially-designed half-and-half affair.

Tom and Max's club choices mirror their parents' own division, with Brummie Karl a Villa fan and 31-year-old nurse Kate coming from Wolves stock.

The twins' older brother Jack, seven, has nailed his flag to the Villa mast like his father. Mr Donnelly, aged 33, a firefighter in Dudley, said: "It just happened really – one sided with me and the Villa then the other one has gone over to the



A cake of two halves for the brothers

dark side. Then when it came to Christmas one of them asked for the Wolves home and away kits and the other asked for home and away kits for Villa.

"Now their mum is having to take Tom to a Wolves match in the new year

with her dad and I'll take Max to Villa with my dad who's also a Villa fan. I think (Tom and Max) both enjoy winding each other up about it – especially as they've got older."

Mr Donnelly, of Gornal, added: "We've actually got four sets of twins in the family and Tom and Max have nine-week-old twin cousins – Zachary and Harry.

"On their birthday we got lovely photos of the twins each holding one of their cousins.

"And we've been winding up [the cousins'] dad – who is a big Wolves fan as well – saying they're going to end up with one supporting Villa and one Wolves like ours."

Karl added: "I'm going to try and get Tom to change to the better side when he's a bit older, but I think he likes the attention when he's out with his brother and they get asked who they support."

Couple admit charges after wedding scam

THIS is the double-dealing business-woman who pocketed over £100,000 while her wedding catering company brought heartbreak to brides throughout the country.

Her husband, Ryan Holt, has pleaded guilty to money laundering.

Lisa Holt was the brains behind the online firm Bake A Cake that let down scores of couples who had paid for slap up meals, wedding cakes, chocolate fountains, DJs, decorations and photo booths that never arrived on their big day.

Several had paid over £1,000 each when they discovered that the Halesowen-based firm had suddenly closed in the summer of 2015.

The mother-of-two has been warned she faces jail after admitting a wedding catering con that cost brides-to-be and companies over £100,000.

Scores of couples had their big day blighted by Lisa Holt's firm. Dudley Trading Standards Department received 150 complaints involving a total of £56,000 worth of broken promises by the company, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard on Tuesday that up to 500 more people made similar claims on social media after the business collapsed.

Internet

Internet giant Wowcha, that offers deals by third parties, also fell victim to the fraudster after she lied to it about her firm's resources, falsely claiming to have 16 photo booths and ten staff.

The two sides reached an agreement for her to provide photo booths and chocolate fountains at weddings and parties which Wowcha advertised on its website and paid her a share of the booking fees.

She pocketed up to £46,000 from this arrangement but did not provide the photo booths for 556 people, leaving Wowcha to refund customers. The overall bill could have been as high as £80,000 when their anticipated profit was taken into account.

Holt, 41, of Albert Road, Halesowen – who arrived at court on crutches – pleaded guilty to defrauding Bake A Cake customers between May 1 and August 31 2015 and making false representations to Wowcha on July 15, 2015. She further admitted making a false claim to AXA insurance on August 18, 2016, that a £6,000 hog roast machine had been stolen during a purported burglary.



Fraudster Lisa Holt left court on crutches

Her husband Ryan, of the same age and address, pleaded guilty to money laundering. He admitted converting criminal property by transferring funds between bank accounts registered to him and his wife.

Mr Mark Jackson, prosecuting for Dudley Council, told the court: "We accept this was a business which started out legitimately, and became fraudulent.

"We do not accept the claim from Mrs Holt that



Ryan Holt – money laundering charge

one of the reasons it failed was because of a hate campaign against her by competitors."

She said in her basis of plea 'robbing Peter to pay Paul while the business was not financially viable'.

The couple were remanded on bail for pre-sentence reports until February 3 when full details of the case are expected to be outlined to the court.

Judge Barry Berlin told them: "These are very serious offences and an immediate custodial sentence is the likely outcome."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Slip roads face overnight closures

SLIP roads at Junction 2 of the M5 in the Black Country will be closed overnight for more than three months, forcing drivers to take long detours.

Traffic will not be able to get on or off the motorway at Birchley Island, in Oldbury, from January 16 to May 1 between 9pm and 6am, once the closures come into force from January 16.

Northbound and southbound sides will be affected meaning motorists accessing the M5 during the night will have head to junctions near Halesowen or West Bromwich.

Green light for apartments plan

PLANNERS have given the go-ahead for 14 apartments to be built on land near Halesowen town centre.

The site will be in two separate blocks. Each apartment will have two bedrooms and two bathrooms. Residential parking will also be included.

It will be situated next door to the Travelodge Hotel development on Whitehall Road, he site is currently under offer for £300,000 with property company Westbridge & Co.

Plans for a Travelodge and KFC that created a total of 66 jobs were given the green light in 2010.

Empty old Co-Op on rental market

A FORMER Co-Op supermarket in Dudley has been put on the market to let after standing empty for more than two years.

The Fisher Street building is opposite Dudley Bus Station, next to the Churchill Shopping Centre.

It has shared access with Farmfoods and pedestrian access from both Birmingham Street and Birdcage Walk.

Offers to let are invited for the site, which is on the market with commercial property company Innes England.

MP angry at hospital parking charge income

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin has hit out over the money made by hospital parking charges last year.

Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust made £455,000 in 2015-16.

Mr Austin said: "I think the charges are outrageous. It's terrible that we have to pay so much when going for treatment or visiting relatives."

Dr Paul Harrison, trust acting chief executive, said funds were used towards maintaining the car parks and delivering 24-hour CCTV.

Singing group recruit

A BLACK Country choir is looking for new singers to boost its ranks.

Rehearsals for Viva Musica take place at Hans Dingle Primary School in Pedmore, Stourbridge and an open evening is taking place on January 17, from 7.30pm. For more details, visit www.viva-musica.co.uk

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FLICKING idly through The Boys' Book of Airfix. Watching the DVD of Swallows and Amazons. Sipping a chilled cocktail of sloe gin and bubbly. Whatever they tell you, the real joy of presents is in the receiving.

A LAW to protect our privacy sounds so kind and wise that no-one could possibly argue against it. And then we look at Germany whose well-meaning obsession with protecting individual privacy meant the first "wanted" posters for the Berlin truck-killer Anis Amri had the face obscured. Media were at first allowed to identify him only as "Anis A." I can't think of a better example of the old saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

AT last, an optimist in the ranks of the elite breaks cover. Did you not punch the air with joy to hear former Bank of England Governor, Lord Mervyn King, speaking of the good things that leaving the EU will bring? While not dismissing the difficulties, he declared:

"There are many opportunities and I think we should look at it in a much more self-confident way than either side is approaching it at present. Being out of what is a pretty unsuccessful European Union - particularly in the economic sense - gives us opportunities as well as obviously great political difficulties." Too many pundits assume that Britain is a spent force which needs the EU for support. The reverse is true. Look around you. Britain has a workforce of 32 million and the fifth biggest economy in the world. We are a huge, busy and potent nation whose power and influence have been limited by a failed 40-year experiment in being governed from Brussels. As that nice Mr Blair put it, things can only get better. And this time it's true.

JUST between you and me, I still fear that when we are finally declared to be Out of the EU, it will look suspiciously like In.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Teenage burglar locked up for car key raids

A TEENAGE burglar who struck at two homes and then tried to break into a third during a 16-day crime spree has been locked up for two years and three months.

Damilola Johnson stole a £10,000 Audi A4 from the driveway of an address in Ridgefield Road, Halesowen, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 18-year-old, from Cradley Heath, got into the house in the middle of the night through an insecure rear window and took the ignition key from the living room, revealed Mr Nicholas Smith, prosecuting.

The occupant went to the bathroom soon afterwards and watched in horror as the engine and headlights of his car were suddenly switched on. He ran downstairs as the vehicle left the driveway and discovered that a back door had been left wide open by the burglar.

Johnson's fingerprint was found on the frame of the window where the break in took place on June 21.

Noise

Five days later, a man living in Yew Tree Road, Kidderminster, was woken by a noise and looked out of the window to find Johnson staring right back at him.

Police were called and found the defendant in nearby Station Hill. He was freed on bail pending further inquiries.

On July 7 Johnson broke

into a house with two female occupants in Pensnett Road, Brierley Hill, at 1.15am.

When the women shouted that they were about to call the police Johnson, who was trying to steal a BMW, fled instead with the keys to a Ford Fiesta at the address and sped off in the car before police arrived.

A policewoman found him hiding in a nearby shed but received bad bruising when pushed to the ground as Johnson tried to escape. He was caught by other officers.

Mr Simon Burch, defending, said the teenager was desperate for money to pay off a drug debt.

Johnson, from Sidaway Street, who had previous convictions for shoplifting and possession of a bladed article, admitted two burglaries, attempted burglary and assault.

He was sent to a Young Offenders Institution for 27 months.

Panto fun at Barlow Theatre



Natalie Forbes and Paul Stevenon-Marks in the panto

OLDBURY Rep is getting ready for its magical seasonal pantomime Dick Whittington.

Based on the folk story and written by Oldbury Rep member, Ian Thompson, this ever-popular panto takes to the stage at the Barlow Theatre, Langley, from tomorrow (Friday) to January 14 and tickets are selling fast - some matinees and evenings are already sold out.

Natalie Forbes will play Dick Whittington and Paul Stevenon-Marks has the dame role as Sarah the Cook in the show.

There are matinees on January 7, 8 and 14. But there will not be a performance on Wednesday, January 11. Evening performances start at 7.30pm and matinees at 2.30pm. Tickets can be obtained by phone or in person from the box office on Monday evenings from 7.30pm, and every night of the production from 7pm.

Tickets are £11 with concessions £10. The box office can be contacted on 0121 552 2761 on show nights from 7pm, also from 2pm on matinees, or book online at www.oldburyrep.org

Residents have a say at forum meetings

RESIDENTS can have their say on £25 million in cuts proposed by Dudley Council at the next round of community forums.

People are invited to one of the 10 forums which run throughout January to have their say on the council's budget proposals. There will be a representative from the police at each forum, to give people the opportunity to raise any crime or social order issues.

Community groups will also have the chance to apply for grants of up to £5,000.

Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe said: "Our community forums give local people the opportunity to get together and tell us about the issues that matter most to them."

The forums are being held at 6.30pm on:

Tuesday: Halesowen North and Halesowen South at Leasowes High School, Kent Road; Woodside, St Andrew, Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood at Woodside Community Centre on Highgate Road.

January 16: Amblecote, Cradley, Wollescote, Lye, Stourbridge North at Withymoor Primary School, Gayfield Avenue; Belle Vale, Hayley Green & Cradley South at Caslon Primary School, Beeches View Avenue.

Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/resident

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Quest zone closes at Merry Hill

THE Quest entertainment zone at Merry Hill closed suddenly just days before Christmas.

A statement on the firm's website confirmed the 'incredibly difficult decision' to close, which comes after a turbulent few weeks.

Quest revealed in November that it was closing its outdoor play area as Merry Hill owner Intu wanted to use the area to create more parking spaces.

Bosses said at the time that the blow of losing the outdoor play area would mean having to make changes in order to survive.

But just six weeks later, the Quest zone closed with the shutters down following the shock decision.

The company has previously faced difficulties during its time at Merry Hill and was saved from closure last year in a last-minute buyout.

Quest owner has Mark Knox promised to release more details about the decision to close at the Brierley Hill mall.

The indoor part of the centre provided a soft play area for youngsters while the centre was also home to Europe's highest indoor ropes course and mini golf. The outdoor area had featured the Nerf combat arena.

Merry Hill said it was 'disappointed' to lose Quest.

GP in court over ten alleged sex offences

A DUDLEY GP has appeared before Walsall magistrates charged with 10 sexual assaults against three patients.

Dr Jaswant Rathore, aged 59, of Ploughmans Walk, Wall Heath, made no plea.

The case was sent to Wolverhampton Crown Court on January 20. Dr Rathore is on conditional bail.

Councillors' allowances could be slashed to make savings

Clubs are stunned by huge rent hike



Club could be forced to move – Lye Town committee members Ray Cox and Dennis Hemmings at The Sports Ground

LYE Town Football Club and Lye Cricket Club could be forced to move after being hit with a proposed 500 per cent rent rise by Dudley Council.

Football club chairman Brian Blakemore said the hike on ground rent would be unaffordable and, if forced through, the non-league club would have to consider leaving its home of 87 years.

The lease on The Sports Ground, on

Stourbridge Road, is up for renewal. The council has agreed to extend it for another 20 years on the condition of a five-fold increase.

Mr Blakemore said he was in negotiations with the council. The ground is shared with Lye Cricket Club, which is also involved in negotiations. Its chairman Dave Borley said the cricket club would 'struggle to survive' if it had to pay the huge increase.

Mr Blakemore, who has been chairman of the Midland Football League outfit for six years, said the football club would look at trying to increase income through fundraising and sponsorship, but may have to consider leaving it home since 1930.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We have a legal obligation to ensure the rent covers all of our assets to ensure the public gets value for money."

COUNCILLORS could take a cut in their allowances as Dudley Council continues to look for new ways to save £25 million.

Leader of the council, Councillor Pete Lowe, has put forward plans to cut his allowance by 10 per cent, while other councillors would lose five per cent.

The leaders of both opposition groups have also agreed to lose 10 per cent from their allowances under the plans.

It comes amid complex negotiations with unions over proposals to introduce changes to terms and conditions for all staff. The council promises to protect the lowest paid staff and a pay freeze will be introduced for those earning above £23,000 a year.

The new plans also include three days unpaid annual leave to be taken over the Christmas shut down period.

The proposals were agreed by cabinet last month and will now form the basis of negotiations between unions and employees.

Councillor Lowe said: "As leader of this council I have made a very clear commitment to cut my own leader allowance by 10 per cent."

Challenging

"We are facing some very challenging times because of unprecedented and continued reductions in funding from national government, and it is important as councillors we lead from the front by cutting our own allowances to save money."

"It is only fair to staff and the public that we are in this together in leaving no stone unturned in finding savings."

"We must also make sure that the savings from staff terms and conditions are fair, which is why we are suggesting the lowest paid of our staff are protected from a pay freeze."

Gardeners are celebrating charity status

RESIDENTS and volunteers are celebrating after a picturesque community garden was granted charitable status. Hawbush Community Gardens was awarded the title after successfully applying to the Charity Commission.

Residents can use allotments at the Brierley Hill facility which is looked after by its users. The garden space was granted charity status ahead of Local Charity Day on December 16, which celebrates charity work in communities.

Hawbush Community Gardens is an oasis tucked into the Hawbush estate. Residents and volunteers have created a community allotment space alongside a handful of private allotments. The group has worked with Dudley Council for Voluntary Service on gaining charitable status. Michelle Betteridge, gardens trustee, said: "We are absolutely delighted."

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Shutting shop on spirit of Christmas

THERE is a great story about legendary Wolverhampton shopkeeper William Snape, who kept the famous tea and coffee emporium opposite this newspaper's office in Queen Street.

One Christmas Eve, sometime around the late 19th century, Mr Snape's assistant, a young boy called Albert, asked if there would be any chance of finishing work early. It was Christmas after all.

Mr Snape paused for thought, and asked the youngster if everywhere was tidy? Albert insisted it was.

"I don't think so," replied the boss as he took a flying kick at a bag of coffee beans, scattering them all over the floor.

Now I'm sure we're all glad those sort of employment practices are a thing of the past. However, I can't help but think that a bit of no-nonsense Victorian discipline wouldn't go amiss on a shop assistant I encountered over Christmas.

Now, admittedly 5.53pm on Christmas Eve is a bit last-minute. Well last seven minutes actually, but you get the point. However, the sign in the window said the shop – a very well-known high street retailer – would be open until 6pm, so why would you doubt it?

Eventually, a grey-haired lady came to the door with the greeting: "What's the problem?"

I pointed to the sign saying open until 6pm, and she replied: "You don't want to take any notice of that, it's Christmas Eve." I suggested it might be a good idea to advertise the correct opening times, and that it was rather poor service.

Grey-haired lady replied: "It's Christmas Eve, we've got families to be with, so on yer bike." And a happy new year to you, madam.

□ □ □

CONGRATULATIONS to Stourbridge FC for making football history as the lowest-ranked club to reach the third-round of the FA Cup.

Manager Gary Hackett has criticised the major broadcasters for overlooking his team's achievement, prompting opinion Mark Moran to contact me with a solution.

"Can you run a story about a Stourbridge-born optician who is offering free specs to BBC staff to help correct their short-sightedness?" he asks.

He suggests rose-tinted lenses for Alan Shearer, Gary Linker and Ian Wright over the way they wax lyrical about big-money sides like Chelsea.

□ □ □

SPRING will see the launch of the new 12-sided £1 coin, designed by Walsall schoolboy David Pearce, and the old coin will cease to be legal tender in October.

Now have a look through your change. How many shiny new £1 coins are there that have that have been minted in the past year or so? And they will all be melted down by the autumn. It's a good thing the country is awash with money, isn't it?



Reflected Glory by Sue Cutler



Southwark Cathedral by Craig Walton



Windmill by Kevin Howell

Snap happy? Try life through a lens

JUDITH HAWKINS takes a look at the winning shots by Hagley Camera Club members

A CAMERA club has rewarded its members for their picture perfect work and is calling on new people to get involved.

Hagley Camera Club offers tuition to those wishing to improve their skills behind the lens, as well as recognising the best snaps taken by its members in a series of competitions held across the year.

The club's variety of events enables attendees to both build upon their own photographic abilities and to learn more from others in the group, including through practical sessions, member presentations and talks from visiting lecturers.

Chair of the club, Richard Harding, said: "We're a little different from other camera clubs in that we don't categorise members by ability level, and aim to be inclusive of all.

Digital

"We run a mix of practical, digital editing, tuition, lecture, critique and competition evenings throughout the year."

Throughout the year members have had the chance to submit their best three shots into five competitions held by the club, accruing points for their entries which are then totted up to find an overall winner for the entire year.

Members are allowed to submit up to three entries per competition, and there were a total of five competitions during the year. Points are awarded for the top five.

Securing first place for the year was Craig Walton, whose striking image of Southwark Cathedral's stunning ceiling certainly shows off his considerable photographic skills.

Phil Homer was a worthy second, and it is clear to see why he scored so highly with his amusing image of a boy reading an old newspaper.



One of the photographs from the Hagley club members – Abreast of the News by Phil Homer

Taking third place was Kevin Howell, with his perfectly captured and serene picture of a windmill, while chair Richard Harding achieved fourth and should be particularly proud of his atmospheric picture of the 'Lady in the Lake'.

In fifth place was Sue Cutler, a glimpse of whom can be seen in her own photograph thanks to her effective use of the reflection in a vintage aeroplane's propellers.

Despite the name, the photographic club is actually based in Wordsley, at meets at Holy Trinity Church Hall every Tuesday at 8pm.

The first meeting of the New Year will be held this Tuesday, January 10, where attendees will be able to explore any new camera kit Santa might have brought them for Christmas.

A practical skills evening will take place the following week on January 17, and there will

be a 'get to know your camera' event held two weeks later on January 24.

"This will be ideal for new members looking to understand a bit more about photography and their cameras to come and check us out," added Mr Harding.

Tutorials

More details, including a selection of photos taken by members, are available online at <http://www.hagleycameraclub.co.uk/> or by searching for 'Hagley Camera Club' on Facebook.

Annual membership is just £20, with a further fee of £3 per attended meeting. 'Specialist' meetings may cost a little more and will be advised in advance.

The club also has lots of useful tips and tutorials written by its members, which are free to download from its website.



Lady of the Lake by Richard Harding

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Museum move to Archives is already a dud

WHO'S Khurshid Ahmed kidding? He's certainly put the 'Dud' in Dudley with the move of Dudley Museum to the archives building.

Any self-respecting town takes a museum for granted in their town centre. The Dudley Archives building is way out of the town centre on Tipton Road, so the likelihood of picking up any passing trade (as Wolverhampton Art Gallery does in droves) is zero.

So that means only those with the clear intention of visiting will make it down there.

Next problem, if they do arrive, is

parking. If you visit Dudley Archives even mid-week, you'll be hard pushed to find a space. Visitors will be forced to double-park and ask for a token to Black Country Living Museum car park. Good luck with that on a busy day.

The much-vaunted 'improved disabled access' is a non-starter too as the museum will be located on the first floor and there's only a goods lift.

They're expecting to run an exhibition programme with only one specialist person. They've fired the other four staff that worked at the museum.

Archives was built and expensively equipped with temperature controlled shelving precisely, as the name suggests, for storing archive documents – not for museum artefacts.

Once in storage the artefacts are unlikely ever to be shown again.

Expect a great deal of hot air and window-dressing when the 'grand new museum' is unveiled to the world.

Yet scratch beneath the surface and you'll find what it really is...a dud.

MARTIN JONES
Sedgley

Give us truth about the centres

MANY years ago, buildings were built in Dudley town centre that are still standing.

Too many to mention but the old 'Hen and Chickens pub' is one.

For the ignorant, that is on the corner of Castle Street and New Street. There are also the council buildings and the museum (for some reason the council are closing that, despite the fact that it belongs to residents).

Back to the leisure centres; these have been built in my lifetime, so their decline questions the brains who gave permission for them to be built.

Were they built to poor designs?

Was the quality of the materials used inferior?

Was the standard of workmanship inferior?

Come on, Dudley councilors, place your cards on the table and give us the truth, if you dare.

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
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EMAIL

dudley.chron@
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Voters should prove identity, says MEP

PROPOSALS for voters to have to prove their identity at the ballot box has my full support.

There have been squeals from some quarters about the Government's proposals but it is, frankly, overdue.

Fraud may not have been widespread, though no one can say for sure, but any such dishonesty taints our electoral system.

And I am pleased that 'harvesting' postal votes for submission by activists is to be banned.

I personally would go further and tighten up the eligibility of postal voters to those who are physically unable to get to a polling station.

As places have shown postal voting offers an easy opportunity for exploitation by those wishing to cheat the system. It is therefore appropriate that it is one of the places chosen for inclusion in this ID pilot scheme.

For those without photo ID two or three forms of proof, such as utility bills, could be used. All adults, rich or poor, should have the ability to vote.

The requirement for voter ID works in Northern Ireland and it should work here too.

JAMES CARVER
West Midlands UKIP MEP

Elderly care more vital than pitch

REGARDING the savage cuts the Dudley Council are proposing to 16 supported living schemes for the elderly. I suggested that other areas should be found instead of these proposed cuts. I said they always attack the most vulnerable in society.

Low and behold, the Dudley Council say they will be part funding a replacement football pitch at the Dell Stadium. £660,000 it's going to cost. Half a million pounds on grant, leaving the council to fund £160,000.

Now this football pitch may need replacing, but they have their priorities wrong if they are prepared to fund this and cut the supported living schemes while we are still in austerity times.

Also they are thinking about demolishing three leisure centres in the borough and building two in place of them. Who at the council is dreaming up these crackpot schemes?

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More than 100 new homes near hospital given the go-ahead

PLANS to build 130 new homes close to Russells Hall Hospital have been approved, despite more than 100 objections.

The houses will be built on vacant land behind the hospital on the Russells Hall estate, despite fears over further parking congestion and the impact on wildlife, including badgers.

Dudley Council's planning chiefs felt that the benefits – such as affordable housing – outweighed the disadvantages with the project, a partnership between the council and housing developer Keepmoat.

A total of 105 letters of objection were handed into the authority, while a petition against the plans received 69 signatures. Dudley North MP Ian Austin had also raised concern. The original plans have been altered following concerns over access, now incorporating two entrances.

Councillor Keiran Casey, vice-chairman of the development control committee, said: "The application has its advantages and disadvantages. Affordable housing will be delivered, which is the biggest benefit. The current land doesn't really have a purpose. I understand the concerns, but from my personal opinion a lot of work has been done to address the access issue. The benefits outweigh the disadvantages."

Colin Knipe, on behalf of residents, said: "The development will lead to danger to pedestrians, even more traffic chaos and will have an adverse effect on shops. There hasn't been any consideration about the impact that the 350 to 400 new occupants will have on local services."



Some of the memorabilia that was on display in Dudley until the museum closed

Concern over potential sale of football legend's relics to United

MEMORABILIA of Black Country football legend Duncan Edwards is set to be sold to Manchester United in a deal that could see it relocated from Dudley to Old Trafford.

The collection was based at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery in the town centre and was due to be moved to Dudley Archives on Tipton Road amid the museum's closure last month due to money-saving cuts.

But now it has emerged that Edwards' former club Manchester United have been in talks with members of his family to buy the collection.

Sedgley UKIP councillor and West Midlands Euro MP Bill Etheridge has expressed concern that the memorabilia of a Dudley footballing hero could be lost to his home town.

He said council officers are working on a deal that could see parts of the collection loaned back to go on display at Dudley Archives, if the Premiership giants buy ownership of the collection devoted to one of their most famous players of the 1950s.

History

"The family have been very kind to allow the items to be on display to the public in Dudley for so long," he said. "However, it appears that they have now decided to sell the collection."

"I believe it is in the interests of the town to make some efforts to improve Manchester United to show some goodwill and allow some, if not all, of the items to remain on display here."

"The club have an excellent museum of their own but I am sure they realise how big a part Duncan Edwards has played in Dudley's history."

"It is important we do our bit to preserve his legacy in the town for future generations."

Mr Etheridge said he has written to Manchester United requesting a meeting to discuss the club's plans.

Rose Cook, founder of the Duncan Edwards Foundation, said: "Duncan's mum, Sarah, always said she wanted his memorabilia to be in Dudley. Hopefully Manchester United will also see it this way, but regardless of what happens to the collection, Duncan's legacy will still be kept alive in Dudley."

United and England player Edwards is honoured with a statue in the town centre and a plaque at his former home near Priory Park. He was a part of Manchester United's famous Busby Babes side. He died aged 21 in 1958 of injuries sustained in the Munich air disaster, which claimed the lives of seven of his team mates, among 23 fatalities.

Dudley Council cabinet member for economic development, Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said: "We are in discussions with the family who own the Duncan Edwards collection about its future."

"Duncan Edwards's legacy is a very important part of our tourism and clearly we will do everything we can to continue to celebrate his life in Dudley."

The Duncan Edwards & Local Sporting Heroes Gallery opened at Dudley's museum in 2008 and includes medals, shirts and 18 England caps. Between 1952 and 1958, Edwards made 177 appearances for Manchester United.

He scored 21 goals and won the league twice, in 1956 and 1957

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Patient sent home too soon gets a payout

A GRANDMOTHER received a six-figure payout from the trust which runs Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital after she became seriously ill following discharge.

Margaret Rogers, aged 58, was left unable to talk and with no feeling in her limbs after initially being told she could leave hospital in 2007. Solicitors taking up her case claim if she had been kept in hospital on antibiotics she would have gone on to make a full recovery.

On her first visit to Russells Hall Mrs Rogers underwent a CT scan and lumbar puncture and was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis.

After being given antibiotics, she showed some signs of improvement and was discharged.

Brain

But her condition soon deteriorated and she was back in hospital at the start of October when it was discovered she had a brain abscess, her solicitors added.

Mrs Rogers was transferred to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and underwent brain surgery, but lost the ability to talk, lost feeling in her limbs and suffered regular seizures.

In August 2010, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her lower spine linked to her earlier issues. Her mobility was affected and her short-term memory was poor.

Following the settlement, Mrs Rogers said: "No amount of money will ever give me back the life I once had, but this settlement has allowed me and my family to achieve the very best quality of life I can."

"It has been a very long and difficult few years." Clare Langford, from Higgs and Sons solicitors, said: "It was our case that doctors should never have allowed Mrs Rogers home. Had she remained in hospital, she would have made a complete recovery."

Dr Paul Harrison, acting chief executive at Dudley Group of Hospitals, said: "We would like to express our sincere apologies to Mrs Rogers and her family."

"We can confirm that an amicable compensation settlement has now been agreed."

Playing fields boost

HAGLEY Playing Fields are set to benefit by £60,000 thanks to funding from new housing developments.

As part of planning permission for 24 homes off Brook Crescent and seven off Western Road, developers had to pay a total of £60,000 towards public facilities in section 106 agreements. Peter Rowbottom, of Hagley Residents Action Group, said: "This is more great news for Hagley."

New dish could leave chip shops squids in



Manager Chris Preece, of Stourbridge, with calamari (fried squid rings) served at Merchants fish and chips shop

IT is the traditional British takeaway on a Friday night. Fish and chips has been a national favourite for decades.

But lovers of cod and chips should enjoy it while it lasts, according to experts who claim it could disappear from menus and be replaced – by squid and chips.

Squid, often called calamari after its name in old Italian, can currently be picked up as a fancy starter at up-market Italian restaurants or enjoyed on holiday abroad. But declining cod stocks could in future mean it will be added to the menu at chippies, along-

side the pies, chicken, kebabs and tinned roe.

The Mediterranean seafood dish is already available at Merchants Fish and Chips in Worcester Street, Stourbridge.

Opened four years ago, the award-winning chip shop brought squid onto the menu to offer more variety to customers, says manager Chris Preece. It sells for £4.70 a portion and is served with salad, a lemon slice and dip.

Mr Preece said squid was rising in popularity but he thought it was doubtful, despite increasing fish prices and dwindling stocks of cod, that it

would replace the traditional favourites.

Lemon sole, haddock and plaice are more likely to replace cod as the number one fish and chips choice, according to Mr Preece.

Most squid is caught in China, frozen and sold to UK wholesalers. Mr Preece said it was defrosted, sliced into around a dozen thick rings, battered and then deep fried in rapeseed oil.

He added: "I think it is a wonderfully light dish. It isn't as heavy as a fish and chips which means it makes a perfect light meal with a glass of wine. Sales have been increasing."

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POTTERY FOR BEGINNERS ****NEW****

Thurs 19 Jan. 19.00 - 21.00. 10 wks. **TBC#**

GET TO KNOW POETRY ****NEW****

Thurs 19 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

CAKES AND CAKE DECORATING ****NEW****

Tues 17 Jan. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

HEALTHY COOKING ****NEW****

Thurs. 19 Jan. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

Thurs. 2 Mar. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

PUDDINGS ****NEW****

Tues 28 Feb. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

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Mon 16 Jan. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £41.00#

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Wed 18 Jan. 9.30 - 11.30. 10 wks. £67.00#

Thurs 19 Jan. 10.00-12.00. 10 wks. £67.00#

Thurs 19 Jan. 13.30-15.30. 10 wks. £67.00#

WATERCOLOURS FOR BEGINNERS

Mon 6 Mar. 14.30-16.30. 3 wks. £21.60#

CREATIVE WRITING

Mon 16 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

Mon 27 Feb. 19.00-21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS

Thurs 19 Jan. 19.30-21.00. 10 wks. £54.00#

LEARN TO SCULPT IN STONE

Tues 17 Jan. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

Tues 28 Feb. 19.00 - 21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

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HOW TO USE A SEWING MACHINE

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UPHOLSTERY SUITABLE FOR ALL LEVELS

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Tues 24 Jan. 14.30-16.30. 3 wks. £21.60#

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Tues 28 Feb. 14.30-16.30. 3 wks. £21.60#

COMPUTER COURSES

(Basic computer and internet skills are required)

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Mon 16 Jan. 9.30-11.30. 5 wks. £36.00#

PHOTOSHOP 2

Mon 27 Feb. 9.30-11.30. 5 wks. £36.00#

CREATE YOUR OWN WEBSITE

Tues 17 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 5 wks. £36.00#

BUYING AND SELLING ON E-BAY

Tues 28 Feb. 19.00-21.00. 4 wks. £28.80#

Tues 28 Feb. 9.30-11.30. 4 wks. £28.80#

AN INTRODUCTION TO IPAD

Tues 17 Jan. 09.30-11.30. 1 wk. £7.20#

Tues 28 Mar. 09.30-11.30. 1 wk. £7.20#

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR IPAD

Tues 24 Jan. 09.30-11.30. 3 wks. £21.60#

BUSINESS

START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Mon 16 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 3 wks. £21.60#

INTRO TO MANUAL BOOK KEEPING

Mon 6 Feb. 19.00-21.00. 8 wks. £57.60#

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

MINDFULNESS

Mon 23 Jan. 19.30-21.00. 4 wks. £21.60#

Mon 27 Feb. 19.30-21.00. 4 wks. £21.60#

HEALTH AND FITNESS

PILATES

TASTER

Thurs 12 Jan. 17.30-19.00. 1 wk. **FREE**

Improvers: Tues 10 Jan. 19.00-20.00. 11 wks. £39.60

Improvers: Wed 11 Jan. 18.30-19.30. 11 wks. £39.60

Improvers: Thurs 12 Jan. 19.05-20.05. 11 wks. £39.60

Improvers: Thurs 12 Jan. 20.10-21.10. 11 wks. £39.60

Beginners @ The Oakfield Centre:

Yoga Fri 13 Jan. 10.00-11.00. 10 wks. £40.00#

Tues 10 Jan. 20.05-21.05. 11 wks. £39.60

Thurs 19 Jan. 18.00-19.00. 10 wks. £36.00#

ADULT SWIMMING LESSONS:

Beginners: Mon. 16 Jan. 19.00-19.45. 10 wks. £31.50#

Improvers: Mon. 16 Jan. 19.45-20.30. 10 wks. £31.50#

Advanced: Mon. 16 Jan. 20.30-21.15. 10 wks. £31.50#

Beginners: Tue. 17 Jan. 19.00-19.45. 10 wks. £31.50#

Improvers: Tue. 17 Jan. 19.45-20.30. 10 wks. £31.50#

DANCE

DANCE FIT

Tues 17 Jan. 18.00-19.00. 10 wks. £36.00#

Tues 17 Jan. 19.10-20.10. 10 wks. £36.00#

LANGUAGES

FRENCH

Inters: Mon. 16 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 10wks. £67.00#

Cont Beg: Tues. 17 Jan. 18.00-19.00. 10 wks. £36.00#

Improvers: Tues. 17 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks. £67.00#

Advanced: Thurs. 19 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks. £67.00#

ITALIAN

Beginners: Mon 16 Jan. 09.30-11.30. 10 wks. £67.00#

Improvers: Mon 16 Jan. 12.00-14.00. 10 wks. £67.00#

Cont Beg: Mon 16 Jan. 14.30-16.00. 10 wks. £54.00#

SPANISH

NEW Beg: Tue 17 Jan. 14.30-16.00. 10 wks. £54.00#

Cont Beg: Wed 18 Jan. 09.30-11.00. 10 wks. £54.00#

Cont Beg: Wed 18 Jan. 11.30-13.00. 10 wks. £54.00#

NEW Beg: Tue 17 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks. £67.00#

Improvers: Wed 18 Jan. 14.00-15.30. 10 wks. £54.00#

MUSIC

PLAY THE GUITAR

Intermediates: Mon. 16 Jan. 19.00-21.00. 10 wks. £67.00#

Cont Beg: Tues. 17 Jan. 19.00-20.30. 10 wks. £54.00#

Improvers: Thurs. 19 Jan. 19.00-20.30. 10wks. £54.00#

PLAY THE GUITAR FOR CHILDREN (8YRS+)

Beginners L1 Mon 16 Jan. 16.45-17.45. 5 wks. £45.75

Beginners L2 Mon 16 Jan. 17.45-18.45. 5 wks. £45.75

Improvers: Thurs 19 Jan. 17.45-18.45. 5 wks. £45.75

L1 = Level 1 L2 = Level 2

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Tue 3 Jan. 09.00-12.00. 3hrs. £19.20

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LEVEL 2 AWARD IN FOOD SAFETY

IN CATERING Tue 28 Feb. 17.30-21.00. 2 wks. £48.00

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Mon-Sat 24-29 Jul 08.30-17.00. £220.00

(Includes course manual and assessment fee)

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Fri 17 Feb. 9.00-12.00. 2 wks. £38.40

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Fri 20 Jan. 9.00-13.00. 1/2 day. £25.60

Fri 24 Mar. 9.00-13.00. 1/2 day. £25.60

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Course Dates: Courses are suspended on 20th to 26th February unless stated otherwise

This programme is subject to change: particularly if we are unable to recruit minimum class numbers. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that this programme and the pricing is accurate at the time of publication, changes and errors may occur. We reserve the right to amend details as required.

PLEASE NOTE: A 1.2% charge will be added to all credit card payments processed through Dudley MBC. Debit card payments remain unchanged.

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Fri 31 Mar. 09.30-12.30. 1 wk. £20.55

MINDFULNESS

Fri 27 Jan. 09.30-12.30. 1 wk. £20.55

INTENSIVE COURSES

HOW TO USE A SEWING MACHINE

Fri 3 Feb. 09.30-12.30. 2 wks. £21.60#

HOW TO USE AN OVERLOCKER

Fri 10 Mar. 13.00-15.30. 2 wks. £18.00#

ADVANCED OVERLOCKER

Fri 10 Mar. 09.30-12.30. 2 wks. £21.60#

CREATE YOUR OWN BAG

Fri 24 Mar. 13.30-15.30. 3 wks. £21.60#

FAMILY LEARNING

The price includes a place for one adult (aged over 19) and a child.

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO SWIM

Children 18 mths-4yrs

Tue 10 Jan. 10.30-11.15. 11 wks. £30.95#

Fri 13 Jan. 10.50-11.35. 11 wks. £30.95#

Sat 14 Jan. 08.50-09.20. 11 wks. £20.65#

Sun 15 Jan. 13.30-14.15. 11 wks. £30.95#

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Thurs 2 Mar. 16.00-17.30. 5 wks. £22.50#

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Freight business plans to expand after buy-out

BUSINESS expansion is on the way at a Halesowen freight forwarding firm following a management buy-out.

Business adviser Central Finance has raised a six-figure finance package for EuroFreight Shipping Agencies to fund the buyout, which will see service provision diversified and secures the future of the business under sole ownership.

Central Finance sourced a peer-to-peer finance package via ThinCats, which allowed shareholder Rick Alphonso to buy out the former owner and to focus on new markets for the freight forwarder.

EuroFreight Shipping Agencies, established in 1991, handles export and import of cargoes to and from destinations worldwide by road, sea and air.

Managing director Rick Alphonso

said: "I have worked in freight forwarding for many years, and have been a director of EuroFreight for the last two. When an opportunity came along to buy-out my former shareholder, and put into practice some of the ideas I have to drive business expansion, it was clear I needed expert advice on gaining finance."

"I couldn't have done it alone. Central Finance took the time to understand my business objectives, the trading history, the potential and how I could achieve the buy-out swiftly and successfully."

"The funds have not only allowed me to buy out my former business partner but also allow us to drive expansion in the road and sea divisions of the business with a new sales and marketing plan and provide bespoke services to the Far East."



Rick Alphonso of EuroFreight, right, with Steve Harris of Central Finance at the firm's Halesowen hub

College has won diversity honour

HALESOWEN College has been named fifth in the country in the National Centre for Diversity's first annual FE Sector Diversity Awards.

The college was shortlisted for its vast equality and diversity work with students and staff, training courses for mental health and learning support, accessibility, flexibility, community partnerships and having student equality ambassadors.

Halesowen College was also named as West Midlands Further Education Provider of the Year in the prestigious awards.

Jo Williams, interim principal at Halesowen College, said: "We are absolutely delighted to receive this honour. Equality and diversity is at the heart of our college values."

"Our students and staff work together to provide a positive learning environment for all."

Junior team in FA clash over strip sponsorship

THE FUTURE of a children's football team is in doubt after the FA ruled that a Black Country nightclub cannot sponsor its kit.

FA chiefs have said the two sponsors of Kings Heath Concorde FC's youth teams – The Arena in Stourbridge and Birmingham tattoo parlour Warstone Body Art – breach its regulations. It means neither firm can have their names and logos on the team kits.

When the decision was announced the future of the Birmingham club's youth teams looked uncertain due to the cost of replacing its kits, but outraged supporters have rallied round, with one even donating £500.

Manager Russell Jukes said: "We decided to start the under eights and under 10s for the first time this season. I wrote about 50 letters to local businesses for support, but we didn't hear anything back until a couple of parents came forward from Warstone Body Art and The Arena."

With these sponsors providing the kits they needed, the youngsters kicked off their season only for a complaint to the FA to stop them in their tracks.

Mr Jukes said: "There are lots of other teams around the country who are sponsored by tattoo parlours, so there doesn't seem to be any fairness."

Expand

"All we are trying to do is to get these kids off the streets and playing football," he said.

Before the FA's sponsorship ban, the club had been looking to expand its youth team provision and planned to provide teams for those aged from six to 10 from March next year.

Despite this setback, Mr Jukes is determined to go ahead with additional teams.

Also disappointed by the FA's decision is Michelle Clarke, general manager at The Arena on Hagley Road. She said: "We are really upset. We are not only a nightclub. We have function rooms and do all sorts of events, like kids' dance shows. The nightclub is only a small part of our business."

"We wanted to support the kids by buying their kit. We went with those from the tattoo studio to

By Judith Hawkins

do a presentation at their Christmas party and saw how happy all the kids were to be part of the team."

Sarah Shand, owner of Warstone Body Art, in the Jewellery Quarter, whose nine-year-old son Louie plays for the team, said: "I just think it's an outdated decision."

At recent matches the under 10s used borrowed kit, while the under eights played with The Arena sponsorship taped over.

Mr Jukes said they would be looking to find a solution over the Christmas break as the youth teams to continue into 2017.

The Birmingham FA says the rules on what is, and what is not, appropriate advertising have been drawn up at a national level and have been in place for a number of years.

Kevin Shoemaker, chief executive officer of the Birmingham FA, said: "We are very sympathetic of our clubs and conscious of the efforts they go to to raise money for kit, venues, referees, courses and other football-related expenditure."

"But there are certain rules and regulations which clubs must adhere to, especially youth clubs. In this instance the FA has adjudicated and our hands are tied."

"Certain things are clear – if it's a pub, it's a no. Others are more subjective, like a social club that has a crèche."

"We will consider these on an individual basis and refer to the FA for any further guidance if need be. "We would encourage any youth team considering a sponsorship deal, if they have any doubts, to contact us."

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Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Learning Services, School Admissions Service, PO Box 16230 Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury B69 9EX annual_schooladmissions@sandwell.gov.uk



Students ensure their Voices heard in contest

STUDENTS from a Black Country school are celebrating winning the National Literacy Trust's Voices writing competition.

Savannah McFadden, aged 14, from Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath, was in first place with her piece 'My Little Meadow'. Fellow student Maymunar Nasir, aged 13, was a runner-up with her poem 'A Place Called Home'.

The Voices competition launched in April 2016 as part of the National Literacy Trust's Literacy for Life programme, which Ormiston Forge Academy has been taking part in since 2014.

Funded by the JJ Charitable Trust, the competition is supported by author and linguist, Professor David Crystal.

Voices challenged students to write 500 words about a public space they feel strongly about.

Alex Bousoulengas, project manager for Literacy for Life at the National Literacy Trust, said: "We were delighted with the number and variety of entries to the competition. The quality was extremely high and this is a testament to how well the school has done in engaging children in reading and writing."

Savannah and Maymunar said they were delighted to have done so well in the prestigious competition and win books for their school.



Savannah McFadden, 14, and Maymunar Nasir, 13, of Ormiston Forge Academy

Man killed in New Year's Eve tragedy

A MAN out celebrating New Year was killed when he was hit by a car on a busy Black Country road.

The 43-year-old was struck by a car in Wolverhampton Road, near the junction of Hagley Road West, in Warley, just before 8pm on New Year's Eve.

The man, who was yet to be named by police as The Chronicle went to Press, was pronounced dead at the scene.

A 46-year-old woman who was driving the car involved, stopped at the scene and was assisting with police inquiries. Wolverhampton Road was closed for several hours.

Detective Constable Jamie Simon from West Midlands Police Collision Investigation Unit said: "It is an extremely sad start to the New Year. A man has lost his life on what should have been joyful celebration."

"The junction where the collision occurred is very busy and I have no doubt several people will have seen what happened. I would urge them to get in touch and let us know what they saw as their information could be very important."

Anyone with information can call police on 101.

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45 Albion Street, WS15 2BY (opposite Morrisons)	Unit 24 Riland Ind. Est. Norris Way, B75 7BB (before the tip)
BROWNHILLS	KIDDERMINSTER
1 Silver Court, WS8 6HA	39 Mill Street, DY11 6XB (just off main lights)
STAFFORD	WILLENHALL
Unit 3 Verulam Court, ST16 3DT (next to the tip)	306 Stroud Avenue, WV12 4HA
OLDBURY	HALESOWEN
Unit 7a, Fountain Business Park (corner of Fountain Lane & Bromford Lane), Oldbury, B69 3BH	Unit 5 Western Business Park, Coombs Road, Halesowen, B62 8AF

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Safety concerns raised at fire-hit former pub

A FIRE-damaged former pub is to be fenced off amid fears over its condition.

The old Dolls House in Newbury Lane, Oldbury was left in a precarious state following the latest in a series of fires last month.

Concerns were raised about the roof structure and that tiles and other material could fall from it. Sandwell Council bosses have called for the building's owners to take action.

Council chiefs said structural engineers were investigating the derelict building to try to make it safer. For now, it will be fenced off to stop people from getting onto the site.

Bosses said they would be looking to contact the owners of the site to serve a notice on them calling for action.

Around 30 firefighters tackled the most recent blaze on December 11.

The site has also been blighted by fly-tipping.

Ward councillor Maria Crompton called for the owners to knock the building down.

Demolished

She said: "The best solution we feel is for this building to be demolished in the interest of safety."

Councillor Paul Moore, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "People are rightly concerned that the owners of the property have left the building in this state and we have sent notices to them instructing them to deal with the problems."

"We instructed them to remove and dispose of all rubbish on the site, to demolish and remove the smoking shelter and to improve the security of the building."

"So far they have not responded to our demands and our legal officers are working on serving further notices instructing them to deal urgently with the problems."



The derelict former Dolls House pub in Newbury Lane, Oldbury

£1.7m to fight homelessness

THE Government has confirmed financial support of £1.7million for Birmingham City Council's efforts to prevent homelessness.

The funding could help up to an additional 9,000 people by tackling the root causes that can lead to someone losing their home.

Birmingham City Council leader Councillor John Clancy said: "We are delighted with the news that our application for the homelessness prevention trailblazer opportunity has been

successful. It is particularly pleasing the government has recognised the ambition of our bid, which will be delivered with a range of partners, helping people accessing our services to get back on their feet."

"Now the funding has been secured, to support existing funding we have previously protected for homelessness, we are looking forward to working with Solihull Council in tackling rough sleepers and youth homelessness through our programme."



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Leaders in Diversity



Hippodrome keys are handed to campaigners

THE keys to Dudley Hippodrome have been handed over to campaigners who helped save the historic venue from demolition.

The long-awaited moment finally came 78 years since the day the theatre was first opened.

Members of the Black Country Hippodrome group have spent years campaigning to save the Castle Hill landmark and can now begin work on transforming the venue and re-opening to the public as a theatre for the next half a century.

The group, which was started by Geoff Fitzpatrick and Malcolm Palmer, have been busy working with architects who are finalising preparations to refurbish the building, which includes a large extension next to Trindle Road.

Within the extension will be a new entrance, cafe and box office.

A first floor bar and restaurant also features in the plan.

But around £5 million needs to be raised by the group to ensure the Hippodrome can open again.

Dr Paul Collins, chairman of the Black Country Hippodrome Limited, said, as the keys were handed over: "It's been a combination of five years hard work and I'm accepting these keys on behalf of everyone who's worked on this campaign.

"We hope that the new hippodrome will kick-start the rebirth of Dudley.

"Hard work and fundraising will now begin to get everything together to begin work on the building which is now a robust shell and turn it into an open working vibrant theatre."

He added: "We'd like to thank the council for putting their trust in us."



Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe hands over the keys to Dr Paul Collins, Hippodrome chairman

New transport app gets a regional trial

THE West Midlands is the only place outside of Finland that will be trialling a new integrated transport system.

The Whim app allows people to combine all their travel needs via their smartphone.

The region will be the UK's testing ground for Whim, an app which has been developed in Finland. The scheme is a collaboration between Transport for West Midlands, MaaS Global of Helsinki and transport providers.

Whim aims to encourage people to use transport other than the private car by giving them a travel plan tailored to their individual needs. Users pay for what transport they think they will require – ranging from car hire to taxis, bus, tram and train travel – over the course of a month or on a pay-as-you-go basis. The app will also establish the best journey routes and tickets deal.

Councillor Roger Lawrence, lead member for transport at West Midlands Combined Authority, said: "This is a great idea to encourage people to consider how they get about other than with the private car."

The pilot will run for 12 months. See whimapp.com/uk

£1m fraud conman is found and locked up

A FRAUDSTER who went on the run after the first day of his trial for a £1 million publishing con is finally behind bars.

Michael Phelan, from Stourbridge, was discovered in a betting shop on the south coast after he absconded from court and went on the run for two months.

In October he was found guilty in his absence and sentenced to seven-and-a-half years after failing to turn up on the second day of his trial at Birmingham Crown Court.



Conman Michael Phelan

The 61-year-old was arrested by Dorset Police in Bournemouth High Street and eventually started his prison sentence on December 15.

He had been convicted of 33 offences of fraud and theft for having run a business franchise con.

It came following a lengthy investigation by trading standards' national scam-busting team.

Phelan, originally from Cardiff, used the name Mike Jones to dupe people into investing in his crooked scheme.

He promised victims a guaranteed level of earnings and their money back within 12 months if they wanted to opt out.

Recruited

Victims were recruited to buy the rights to distribute his books for between £4,750 and £79,000. However, when they requested to see the books they were unavailable or the promised support never materialised.

The scam ran for more than 10 years with making Phelan about £1m.

During the trial, evidence was heard from more than 30 witnesses from across the country who had invested money in the scheme. Many had been left bankrupt and even homeless.

One victim from Blackpool, loaned Phelan £90,000, most of which was never

repaid and Phelan moved to the West Midlands. He soon started to again to recruit agents into his bogus scheme, operating out of Stourbridge and Brierley Hill.

After he failed to return to court, claiming he was ill, inquiries showed he had cleared out the room he had been renting and the trial continued without him.

Brought back to Birmingham Crown Court after his arrest, he admitted an additional offence of failing to attend court whilst on bail. Phelan was sentenced to an additional six months in jail for that offence, to run consecutively to the initial term, making a total of eight years behind bars.

Lord Toby Harris, chairman of National Trading Standards, said: "I am pleased that Mr Phelan has now been brought to justice.

"He operated a major fraudulent scheme. The scheme left his victims out of pocket and in many cases bankrupt or homeless."

Photo show at the NEC

THE Photography Show 2017 is coming to Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre in March.

Experts will show how to capture stunning images in the show's Behind the Lens Theatre. Sessions are included in the show entry ticket fee and will take place each day from March 18 to 21. Tickets are on sale from the www.photographyshow.com website.

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16Uni support
is music to
CBSO's ears

Halesowen Chronicle
Thursday, January 5, 2017

THE University of Birmingham is supporting the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's (CBSO) new year tour of China – marking a long musical partnership between the two institutions.

Supporting its home city's orchestra, the University is the academic partner for the CBSO's tour of five concerts in four Chinese cities in late December and early January.

The CBSO will perform Elgar's Enigma Variations in programmes of music which will also include Tchaikovsky, Sarasate and Dvorak at concerts in Beijing, Changsha, Guangzhou and Shanghai.

University of Birmingham vice chancellor Professor Sir David Eastwood will attend the Beijing concert after hosting a special reception for some of the university's friends and partners in China.

He said: "The University of Birmingham has a proud musical heritage which began with Sir Edward Elgar's appointment as our first professor of music and continues today with our innovative teaching and research that place us at the forefront of music in the UK."

Homes planned at
dumping hotspot

A FLY-tipping hotspot could be transformed as plans to build new homes were revealed.

Proposals have been submitted for five homes on land between Arlington Road and Ebrington Road in West Bromwich.

The area, off the main All Saints Way, has been blighted by vandalism and anti-social behaviour and rubbish has often been dumped there.

Aspire Homes is behind the scheme and a decision is expected in the next few weeks. A new access road would also be built.

Fly-tippers who made £1m
told to pay back £39,000

School celebrates good news from Ofsted



Staff and pupils outside Bristnall Hall Academy, which has received a 'good' Ofsted rating

AN academy in the Black Country is celebrating after its Ofsted rating has risen from 'requires improvement' to 'good' following its latest inspection.

Bristnall Hall Academy in Oldbury was previously told in November 2014 by the schools watchdog that it needed to improve, but now it has been commended in all areas, particularly for leadership, quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

The new Ofsted report published this month stated: "The principal, senior leadership team and governors are

committed to making the school the best it can be.

It continued: "Leaders' work has led to demonstrable improvements in teaching, attendance, behaviour and outcomes."

Principal Vince Green joined Bristnall Hall Academy in September 2014 and inspectors commented that his 'inspired leadership has secured improvements'. The academy on Bristnall Hall Lane has 957 pupils on its roll aged between 11 to 18. It is part of the Academy Transformation Trust

(ATT). Among the areas of concern during the November 2014 inspection was that not enough students had made consistently good progress since it opened as an academy.

The latest report said: "Achievement across the school has improved considerably since the last inspection. Consistently good teaching, supported by strong leadership and effective pastoral care, has led to improving outcomes for pupils." The curriculum was also praised for preparing pupils for life beyond school."

A FATHER and son, who made more than £1 million out of illegally dumping rubbish, have been ordered to repay £39,000.

Ranbir 'Nick' Singh, 45, and 65-year-old Balwant 'Bob' Singh Bagrha stockpiled thousands of tons of refuse they had been paid to take to landfill.

The younger man, who lives at Goode Close, Oldbury, was jailed for 18 months at Wolverhampton Crown Court in January 2014 after pleading guilty to seven offences. His father – from Victoria Road, Oldbury – admitted four offences and received a 12-month suspended jail term.

Last year Bagrha admitted making £1.26m in six years before the racket was uncovered. His son agreed that the sum in his case was £846,000.

But they have now shown a Proceeds of Crime hearing at Manchester Crown Court that most of the cash and assets discovered by forensic accountants to have passed through their hands was either legally earned or no longer available to be seized.

Packed

The father and son ran Langley Skip Hire that packed a site in Nelson Street, Oldbury with 1,200 tons of rubbish. In September 2010 they expanded and started to pour up to 23 lorry loads of waste a day into Butlers Yard in Parsonage Street.

Fourteen months later it was filled with more than 3,000 tons of refuse and they moved to West Bromwich Street, Oldbury.

Kate Oates Environment Manager with the Environment Agency said after the Proceeds of Crime hearing: "The Environment Agency has continued to take legal action against Mr Ranbir Singh and Mr Balwant Bagrha. The former was ordered to pay £29,000 while his father was told to pay £10,000."

If the cash is not paid by March 19 they each face three months in jail.

Pounding the
bounds with
walking fans

EAGER walkers can now sign up for a major fundraiser after registration for the popular event opened. Due to demand, people can now get their places for the Rock Pound The Bounds walking event, taking place on April 30.

It's held in support of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity and the walk starts and finishes at Rock Village Hall, near Kidderminster. It is open to trail runners and walkers of all abilities and there are six different lengths of walks. These include the marathon 18 mile, half marathon, nine mile and six mile trails, plus a three mile treasure trail for youngsters.

On behalf of the organisers, the Rock Pathfinders committee, Sue Humphries, said: "Pound The Bounds continues to grow in popularity, so this year we decided to launch online registration early." To find out more visit www.poundthebounds.com.

Entry fees start from £3 per person for the treasure trail and £6 for the more advanced walks.



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Replacing collapsed wall will cost over £230,000

A 12ft wall that collapsed over two years ago could cost council bosses more than £230,000 to rebuild.

The wall fell into Stacey Close, Old Hill, in June 2014. Sandwell Council bosses have now said that they are looking to appoint a contractor to undertake the 'major structural works' in fear that it could collapse and 'lead to serious injury or a fatality.'

The council report states that the anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £239,885.

The wall also fell into the rear of Clyde Street, which caused problems for neighbouring properties.

Orange barriers remained in place following the collapse but concerned resident, Robert Mooney, claimed earlier this year that despite several visits from council officers still nothing was being done.

It was decided in October that the Sutton Coldfield Construction company will undertake the work.

Mr Mooney spoke of his delight that the issue was finally nearing a resolution.

Battle

He said: "It has been a three year battle and I am happy that something will be done about this."

"I have heard that work is expected to start in January, so we shall see. When it goes ahead, I will be very pleased."

The report to the council's interim director of neighbourhood services states that six companies were sent the tender documents - with one estimating a cost of around £422,000 for the repair work.

It says: "The contract is required to undertake major structural works to the gardens, outbuildings, foundations and retaining walls at the side of



Robert Mooney's garden backs onto the wall that has fallen down in Old Hill

16 Stacey Close and the rear of Clyde Street Properties. The collapsed wall is in the ownership of Sandwell MBC, and therefore the council is responsible for its upkeep."

Around 28 cubic metres of soil will be excavated per garden, including the demolition and replacement of one garage-workshop in the rear garden of one of the private properties as it is built next to the partially collapsed wall.

Re-instatement works to the rear

gardens once the retaining wall has been completed will include slabs to pathways and fences.

A fence will also be installed on top of the new retaining wall.

A section of the unadopted highway at the top of Stacey Close will need to be removed and reinstated so that the concrete footing and retaining wall can be installed.

Other repair options were also considered by council bosses.

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Saucy jokes at 'Carry on panto'



Steve McFadden as King Rat and John Barrowman as Dick

BRUM'S big panto is a laughter riot, a colourful chaotic festive avalanche of raucous slapstick and saucy humour... but may-be too saucy.

As always at the Hippodrome, the costumes are stunning and the special effects, including a giant rat, flying reindeer sleigh and 3D underwater adventure, are second to none.

But the double and single entendres come thick and fast. So much so that mum and dad may be facing a few awkward questions from the youngest panto-goers. It feels like Carry On Panto.

It all starts with the panto hero's

Leon Burakowski reviews Dick Whittington, Birmingham Hippodrome's big pantomime

name. John Barrowman as tricky Dicky can't let those all-too-easy gags remain unsaid.

Super-showman Barrowman is a powerful singer and a decent hoof-er, and in no doubt of his own star quality. The confident panto star dominates every scene he is in.

He certainly has a rapport with tiny Janette Krankie, as Wee Jimmy, after appearing with panto veterans The Krankies at several Glasgow pantos.

In one scene he ends up in bed with Wee Jimmy (which is wrong

on so many levels) and Barrowman goes on to manhandle the 68-year-old comedienne in a frenetic 12 Days of Christmas. I think I now know how it feels to cringe and laugh at the same time.

Those who delighted in The Krankies' panto appearances at Wolverhampton Grand will cheer the return of Wee Jimmy's Picking On Me song and the transformation into Ozzy Osbourne and 'MacDonna', pointy bra and all, singing about living 'in a miniature world'.

Andrew Ryan as Sarah The Cook is as much drag queen as panto dame but looks stunning in mind-blowing costumes and does have some of the best lines.

Traditional

The traditional female roles, played by TV show winners turned West End stars Jodie Prenger (as Fairy Bow Bells) and Danielle Hope (as Alice), were largely kept out of the funny business and seemed merely present to look pretty and sing sweetly.

The heart of the panto – and this is a show lacking some heart – was Matt Slack as Idle Jack, who is becoming a regular at the Hippodrome panto and is already booked to play Buttons in Cinderella next year.

Slack is a gifted physical comedian and impressionist. He did a great Michael McIntyre and a 'Grant Mitchell' in front of his



Fan-dab-a-dozi – The Krankies in the Hippodrome panto

TV brother, as EastEnders Steve McFadden plays King Rat with a whiplash tail and lots of villainous enthusiasm.

Slack also gets the balance of friendliness, silliness and making fun just right when shepherding the children on stage for the sing-along scene.

Dick Whittington continues at the Hippodrome until January 29.

It is anarchic and frequently hilarious but does deserve a PG certificate.



Jodie Prenger plays Fairy Bow Bells



Matt Slack as Idle Jack and Andrew Ryan as Sarah the Cook



Andrew Ryan pics by Paul Coltas

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Tasty and healthy start to the year at Bangla Lounge

Commercial feature

INDIAN restaurant Bangla Lounge has been a popular fixture on Halesowen's High Street for more than a decade, attracting a loyal clientele with its mouth-watering range of traditional favourites and in-house specialities.

Head chef Abdul Ahad, who has worked for manager Bari Azad and his family for more than 20 years, continues to bring creative flair to traditional dishes as well as creating his own delicious specialities.

Recent additions to the extensive menu include lamb curry which is slow cooked with garlic and ginger.

There are plenty of options for vegetarians and for fish lovers including salmon, prawn and white fish.

Offer

Mr Azad said: "Because people traditionally like to keep a tight rein on their purses and wallets in January, we're introducing a new offer on Friday and Saturday evenings when diners can enjoy any starter, any main course, rice or naan, or vegetable dish plus ice cream and coffee for just £13.95. This offer is available for a limited period only."

Diners visiting on any evening between Sunday and Thursday can enjoy a two-for-one offer on main courses (eat in only, terms and conditions apply).

Bangla Lounge is aware that some weight conscious diners will be aiming to shed a few pounds in early 2017 and will be serving wholemeal bread and rice on request plus lower fat dishes.

The friendly staff are more than happy to



The stylish interior of popular Halesowen restaurant Bangla Lounge, where new dishes have been added to the menu

advise on the healthier options that are available on the menu.

If you are planning a celebration in 2017, the restaurant's upstairs function room, which can cater for up to 40

diners, is a popular venue for work parties, birthdays and anniversaries. Call to discuss your exact requirements.

Takeaways are also available for a 20 per cent discount and free home

delivery within a three mile radius of the restaurant.

For more details, or to book a table, call 0121 585 7020 or visit www.banglaloungehalesowen.co.uk



Bangla Lounge is a popular fixture on Halesowen's High Street

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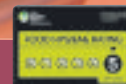
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Lucy o-Kay with range of big roles

Lucy Kay shot to fame when she sang her way to the final of Britain's Got Talent in 2014.

The 27-year-old's singing career duly delivered, securing a record deal with Sony and then her debut album, *Fantasia*, shooting to No1 on the classical music charts.

She performed the national anthem for the 2014 Community Shield football match at Wembley in front of 80,000 alongside one of the most iconic and influential performers in opera, Andrea Bocelli.

She then topped off a remarkable year with a performance fit for royalty, singing in front of Prince Andrew, Sarah Ferguson and their two daughters along with a long line of A-listers at a private dinner held at Windsor Castle in aid of Children in Crisis.

It has been a real rags to riches story for this year's Wolverhampton pantomime princess.

It wasn't always glitz and glamour for the Leicester-born singer, who admits growing up was difficult without her father, who left when she was a baby, and bullies made much of her early life miserable. She said: "Growing up was a struggle, my childhood wasn't one you'd hope for for your children. With my dad leaving when I was born, I took that hard and assumed it was my fault."

"Apparently as I was growing up, I was always asking strangers, men, if they were my dad, which for my mum was really embarrassing. From that, when I used to make friends I used to be more needy than most, people took advantage of that which set me up for being bullied. We moved to quite a poor area of Mansfield where I got bullied for being from a different area."

"Then when I started singing, as it was classical, I got bullied for that too."

"As well as the mental abuse, there was physical abuse. I have scars from cigarettes they put out on my chest."

"It got to a point in my life where I thought, 'I'm not sure if I want to be here', and it's sad for a child to think like that."

While school bullies may have fulfilled the role of the cruel step-sisters as in Cinderella, there was a trio of strong women who stepped forward to play the role of the fairy godmother. Her mother, Glenis, proved to be a supportive role model throughout her youth and Lucy confesses it was her encouragement which got her to where she is.

Other contenders for the role include Pamela Cook, founder of Cantamus, the choir she would later join. "She helped me

financially and to get to uni, she unfortunately passed away before I went on Britain's Got Talent, she would have been proud."

Elaine Guy, also from the choir group, home-tutored Lucy free of charge to resit her GCSEs and take her A-levels so she'd get into music college. She'd failed her GCSEs first time round down to the bullying she suffered.

Lucy's big break came when she appeared in front of 2,000 people and four intimidating judges on TV show Britain's Got Talent, with 11 million people watching at home.

An edited version of proceedings didn't show Lucy sing Who Wants To Live Forever by Queen, a song chosen by the BGT producers. It was a track she wasn't comfortable singing, resulting in Simon Cowell stopping her, telling it was a bad audition and asked her for another song.

What made the cut was her version of opera song Vissi d'arte, leaving the audience and judges stunned and a standing ovation followed.

Successful

She finished runner-up in the competition and then went on to sing on several successful tours proving hugely popular as a contemporary soprano. However this year Lucy took to the stage in a different form – as the narrator in Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, which proved popular at the Grand Theatre.

She said: "I was really nervous at Joseph but I got through it and I had good reviews fortunately – I had a week to learn everything."

As in all fairytales, it's happily ever after for Lucy as she's currently playing Princess Jasmine in Aladdin and thriving in her latest role.

She said: "I love the cast in Aladdin, we all get on so well and we have a good laugh when things go wrong too, which is really important."

"The Grand is a really nice venue with the revamp and Bohemians [situated across Lichfield Street] is a great bar, I love it there. Slater's is really nice too, we had our Christmas party there, everyone was really friendly."

Aladdin runs at Wolverhampton Grand Theatre until January 22.

Tickets can be bought from the box office in person or by calling 01902 42 92 12 or online at grandtheatre.co.uk

By Doug Wootton

● For the full interview, visit www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/



Lucy in her role at the Grand Theatre



Gales free

Unfortunately, you have to go through some things to be free', says Memphis-born Eric Gales.

"Now, I feel the most free I've ever been in life, even more so than when I was a kid," he opens up. "You gotta help yourself man, once you can help yourself you can genuinely help someone else."

His new album, *Middle Of The Road*, will be released on February 24. "It's about being fully focussed and centred in the middle of the road. If you're on the wrong side and in the gravel you're not too good and if you're on the median strip that's not too good either, so being in the middle of the road is the best place to be."

It is Gales' fourth album on Provogue/Mascot label Group after Transformation (2011), Relentless (2010) and The Psychedelic Underground (2007) and it sees him at his most expressive yet. It is a deeply personal and reflective record that echoes where he is in his life right now and he opens himself up and allows himself the chance to really flourish.

It's well documented that Gales was a child prodigy and heralded as the second coming of Jimi Hendrix when he released his debut album The Eric Gales Band in 1991 as a 16-year-old on Elektra Records. It was the first of 10 albums on a major label through a blistering career. He has released 14 studio albums in total ahead of *Middle of the Road* and a host of other collaborations, one of which led him to work with producer Fabrizio Grossi.

Lie-in King

A funnyman described by one national newspaper as 'unquestionably the best observational comic of his generation' is heading to Telford.

Lie-in King Seann Walsh has also been described as 'one of comedy's hottest properties...very talented, very funny'.

He has also previously toured successful show Ying and Young with fellow comedian Josh Widdicombe.

He will bring his new show to Oakengates Theatre @ The Place on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 8pm.

Venue spokesman Chris Kowalik said: "As star of Channel 4's Stand Up For The Week and BBC1's Live At The Apollo, you might have seen Seann on TV, but he's something else live – pacing the stage, working the room and reducing crowds to hysterics. Even if he'd probably rather be at home watching Sky Sports News."

The show received positive press after being unveiled at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and fans can look forward to the usual oddball looks at everyday life from Seann.

Tickets for The Lie-in King at Oakengates Theatre @ The Place are £15.

They are on sale now and can be booked online at www.theplaceatelford.com or by calling the box office on 01952 382382, or in person at the theatre or Southwater One in Telford Town Centre.

Hungry show

One of the most iconic characters in children's literature will be arriving in Birmingham next month when The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show plays at New Alexandra Theatre for two nights from Monday, January 30 following a West End run.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show will feature a menagerie of 75 enchanting puppets during a magical 60-minute show that faithfully adapts four of Eric Carle's best-loved books for the stage: The Artist Who Painted A Blue Horse, Mister Seahorse, The Very Lonely Firefly and, of course, The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Eric Carle's books have captivated generations of readers with their iconic hand-painted illustrations and distinctively simple stories, introducing millions of children to a bigger, brighter world, and to their first experience of reading itself.

His best-known work, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, has nibbled its way into the hearts of millions of children all over the world. It has been translated into 62 languages and sold more than 43 million copies, remaining one of the top 10 best-selling children's books of all time.

Since it was first published in 1969, Eric Carle has illustrated more than 70 books, most of which he also wrote, and more than 132 million copies of his books have sold around the world.

Strictly special start to the year



The Strictly Come Dancing glitterball champions 2016 Ore Oduba and Joanne Clifton, who will be replaced by Karen Clifton

THE final line-up for has been announced for the Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour – including dates later this month in Birmingham.

The show will feature 2016 winner Ore Oduba but instead of his glitterball winning partner Joanne Clifton, he will be dancing with her fellow professional (and sister-in-law) Karen Clifton.

Joanne is preparing to star in the

UK tour of musical Thoroughly Modern Millie, which visits Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre in February.

Also in the Strictly show room January 20 to 22 at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena will be Louise Redknapp with Kevin Clifton, Danny Mac and Oti Mabuse, people's favourite Ed Balls with Katya Jones, Daisy Lowe and Aljaž Skorjanec and Lesley Joseph with Gorka Marquez.

Completing the line-up are professional dancers Giovanni Pernice, Janette Manrara, AJ Pritchard, Chloe

Hewitt, Oksana Platero and Neil Jones. The celebrities and pro dancers will be joined by judges Len Goodman, Craig Revel Horwood, who also directs the show, and Karen Hardy. The 2017 tour host is Anita Rani.

The show kicks off in Birmingham on Friday (20) at 7.30pm, Saturday (21) at 2.30pm and 7.30pm and Sunday (22) at 1.30pm and 6.30pm. Tickets are on sale from www.theticketfactory.com or by calling 0844 33 88 222. For more information, visit www.strictlycomedancinglive.com

Kara stars in a chiller

CLASSIC thriller Gas Light must be one of the few plays that has given rise to a term for psychological abuse, in that 'gaslighting' means making someone doubt their own sanity.

A fresh revival of crime writer Patrick Hamilton's play stars Kara Tointon (pictured left) as victimised wife Bella Manningham, a role vividly portrayed by Ingrid Bergman with an Oscar-winning performance in the 1944 movie.

Leading lady Kara Tointon has had West End stage success, was one of the stars of TV drama Mr Selfridge, won the 2013 series of Strictly Come Dancing and last year played Maria in ITV's The Sound of Music Live! Most recently she has been seen in ITV's new hotel-based wartime drama The Halcyon.

Also appearing in the spooky stage drama set in fog-bound Victorian London is Merlin actor Rupert Young, brother of singer Will, as her husband. Keith Allen plays a detective who makes a shocking discovery. He is a familiar face from stage, film and TV, still perhaps best known as the dastardly Sheriff of Nottingham in TV's Robin Hood. He is also a father of six including pop singer Lily Allen and Game of Thrones star Alfie Allen.

Gaslight starts a UK tour at Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre, where it runs from January 6 to 14, its only Midlands dates.

Bowie tribute close to first anniversary

JUST three days before the first anniversary of David Bowie's death, one of the top Bowie tribute acts, Jean Genie, will be presenting a homage to the influential rock star.

Walsall-based John Mainwaring has been performing his tribute to Bowie for more than 20 years and brings his show to Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Saturday.

Also coming up at the Robin this Friday is Steely Dan tribute Nearly Dan. On Sunday 'space rock' pioneer Nik Turner, former saxophone player with Hawkwind, brings the latest version of Space Ritual to the Mount Pleasant venue.

Band in city music store acoustic set

ROCK band You Me At Six release fifth studio album, Night People, tomorrow (Friday) and fans can get a preview when they appear that day at 5.30pm for an acoustic set and album signing at hmv Birmingham.

A limited edition hmv exclusive picture disc vinyl version of the album will be available on a first come first served basis at the Bullring store. Wristbands will be available by pre-ordering the album from the store, one per person. Any remaining wristbands will be issued on the day for those buying the album.

The band are in concert at Birmingham O2 Academy on April 10.

Jump and jive with King Pleasure

KING Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys' zany stage show sometimes belies the fact that they are one of the finest bands celebrating early rhythm and blues bands to come from outside the USA.

The Brum-based band carries a guarantee of great swinging music and high entertainment value and last year the high-octane jump and jive outfit were spreading their message throughout Europe promoting their 11th CD Live at Last.

King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys are performing at Artrix Theatre in Bromsgrove on Saturday, then at Bilston's Robin 2 on January 26 with Ricky Cool.

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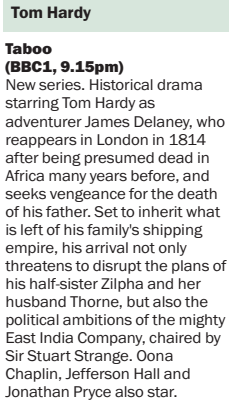
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BBC1



7.00 Breakfast, 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live, 11.30 The Best Disks Ever, (R) 12.00 Football Focus, 1.00 BBC News; Weather, 1.15 Live Athletics – Great Edinburgh Cross Country, 2.00 Coverage from Holyrood Park, 3.30 Escape to the Country, (R) 4.00 Final Score, 5.20 BBC News, 5.30 Regional Programme, 5.40 Celebrity Mastermind. Famous faces tinkle into the black chair to answer questions on their choice of subject. The second round sees them putting their general knowledge to the test in a bid to carry off the commemorative trophy.

6.10 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present a new, themed edition of the unorthodox quiz. Featuring Jo Whalley, Jeremy Vine, Zoe Lister-Jones, Michael Ball, Ken Bruce, Anneke Rice, Vanessa Feltz and Craig Charles. With a performance by Myleene Klass.

7.00 Let It Shine. New series. Talent search to find five performers to play the role of a boy band in a new nationwide touring musical, featuring the music of Take That. In the first episode, 100,000 people audition solo in front of the judging panel, made up of Gary Barlow, Dannii Minogue, Martin Kemp and Amber Riley, and perform before a studio audience in Manchester.

8.25 Casually. Dylan becomes the source of gossip after Seb's allegation, but Max and Jez are determined to help him and try to record Seb confessing his guilt. Alan and Ethan wake up together in a blissful happiness, but are forced to face the consequences of their actions, and Connie spots something in Grace's medical notes that leads her to reporting it to GMC.

9.15 Taboo. New series. Historical drama starring Tom Hardy as adventurer James Delaney, who appears in London in 1814 after being presumed dead in Africa many years before.

10.10 BBC News. Weather; National Lottery draw.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights from the third round of the FA Cup, including Manchester United vs Reading, Everton vs Leicester City and Southampton vs Middlesbrough.

12.00 Film: The Double. (2011) 1.35 Weather for the Week Ahead, 1.40 BBC News.

ITV

6.05 Coast. (R) 6.50 Film: No Minor Victims. (1948) **8.25 Film:** Angels One Five. (1953) **10.00 Secret Britain.** (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.30** The 50th Anniversary of the People's Republic of China. **12.00** Adventure. (R) **1.00** Child Stars: Talking Pictures. (R) **1.35 Film:** Cimarron. (1960) Western, starring Glenn Ford. **4.00** Mastermind. (R) **4.30** University Challenge. (R) **5.00** Only Connect. (R) **5.30** The World's Most Extraordinary Homes. (R)

6.30 Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise. Exploring the wildlife and culture of the Southeast Asian nation. The first episode examines the country's rich natural resources, and the role of tourism as a popular tourist destination for Westerners, and examines the role of spirituality in daily life. Narrated by Sophie Okonedo. (R)

7.30 Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney. An investigation into the archaeological wonders of Orkney on the island of Orkney, the archaeological indicate that Orkney was the cultural capital of Stone Age Britain and the birthplace of the stone circle cult. Chris Packham uncovers the secrets created by the Pictish and Orkney's unique vote, Neil Oliver explores tombs and monuments, Shini Somara experiments to discover how ancient Orcadians could have moved giant blocks of stone over rough ground, and Andy Torbet climbs a challenging sea-stack to unlock the story of Orkney's unusual geology. (R)

8.30 Dad's Army. With the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard now established, Captain Mainwaring sets about trying to get equipment for the platoon. (R)

9.00 Bowie: The Last Five Years. A portrait of David Bowie, told by the people who knew him best – his friends and artistic collaborators. It tells the story of a decade that took at his last albums The Next Day and Blackstar, and his play Lazarus. Through the prism of this last work, the film shows how, in his last years, Bowie's music only began producing music money but returned to the core and defining themes of his career. Among the contributors are Tony Visconti, Toni Basil and Michael C Hall.

10.30 Film: The Man Who Fell to Earth. Nicolas Roeg's 1976 sci-fi drama, starring David Bowie.

12.45 Film: Walkabout. (1971) **2.20** This is BBC Two.

CHANNEL 5

7.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.00** The King of Queens. (R) **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.15** Frasier. (R) **9.20** The Bill Engvall Show. (R) **9.50** The Bill Engvall Show. (R) **10.15** The Simpsons. (R) **10.45** The Simpsons. (R) **11.15** The Simpsons. (R) **11.45** A New Life in the Sun. (R) **12.45** Darts: BDO Ladies' World Championship and BDO World Championships. The opening day of BDO World Championships. **5.30** Speed with Guy Martin. (R)

7.00 Channel 4 News.

7.30 Britain's Favourite TV Detectives. Documentary seeking to identify Britain's favourite on-screen detective as a YouTuber. And these fictional crime-fighters have been a staple of TV schedules for more than half a century, and as the results of the poll count down to reveal the UK's most cherished TV detective, New Tricks' David Walliams, Redman and Dennis Watersham, Stargate's Wally Pfister and David Soul, and Foyles' War Catcher Anthony Horowitz discuss the enduring appeal of the good mystery.

9.00 Film: *Hideaway* (2014). Premiere. A wannabe police officer persuades his girlfriend's tough detective brother to take him along on duty. The cop hopes to scare his unwanted partner away from him by exposing him to danger – but needs some help when the patrol leads to a run-in with the city's most wanted criminal. Comedy, starring Ice Cube, Kevin Hart and Laurence Fishburne.

10.55 Film: The Mechanic. (2011) A solitary hitman teaches his murdered mentor's son the tricks of the trade so they can join forces to seek vengeance. Action thriller remake, starring Jason Statham.

12.45 Darts: BDO World Championships. The illustrious sell-out stage show recorded at the Grand Theatre in Leeds. (R) **2.15** Hollywood. Omnibus. Ryan tells Mercedes that he is being blackmailed over their night together, and Tom is quit-busted by the police. Sally's money troubles since Jude's scam. **4.20** Shipping Wans. UK and Jenna transport a sailing boat from Cornwall to North Yorkshire. (R) **5.05** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. Creating a romantic bedroom for the newlyweds. Sally Man. George Clarke revisits the restoration of water mill in Northumberland. (R)

DIGITAL

9.00 Milkshake! **9.55** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.30** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **11.25** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **12.25** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **1.20** The Hotel Inspector. (R) **1.55** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **3.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **3.45** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.15 NCIS: Los Angeles. New series. The search for Hietly in Romania and start out the Cornescu beach house, hoping to confirm she is alive. Real-time episode, starring Chris O'Donnell.

7.05 NCIS: The Stargazers. The CEO of a software company linked to a terrorist attack against the Department of Defense is kidnapped, and Kensi and Deeks go undercover to protect the man's family after fears over their safety. Meanwhile, Callen continues to reinvent his past.

8.00 NCIS. New series. The American crime drama following the work of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service returns, as Gibbs fights for his life or board a US Navy helicopter ship after being shot. Meanwhile, DiNozzo and Joanna Teague head for Shanghai, where they hope to take down the leaders of the terrorist group known as The Calling. Starring Mark Harmon, Michael Weatherly and Mimi Rogers.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the residents' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they get to use their "celebrity" status to win prizes, foibles while also coping with the day-to-day complications of life inside the house.

10.00 Film: Sex Tape. (2014) Premiere. A couple try to spice up their marriage by filming themselves having sex, but then have to stop anyone from seeing the footage. Comedy, with Cameron Diaz and Jason Segel. Including 5 News Update at 11pm.

11.50 The Little UK: Danny Dyer vs Craig Revel Horwood. Melanie Brown and Professor Green present the musical game show as actor Danny Dyer and dancer Craig Revel Horwood go head to head in a song. (R)

12.15 SuperSizing, **3.10 Celebrity Big Brother**. (R) **4.00** The World's Strongest Man 2016. (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R)

B0C Why the Industrial Revolution Happened here **8.00** The Magic of Mushrooms **9.00** Lost Kingdoms of Central America **11.00** The Young Americans in Viva Rock Vegas (2000) **1.55** Family Guy: An Evening with Sammy Davis Jr. **12.50** Sammy Davis Jr.: The Kid in the Middle **1.50** Sings the Great American Songbook **2.55** An Evening with Sammy Davis Jr. **3.50** Close
ITV2
11.55 Take Out Our Celebrity Special **1.55** Ninja Warrior UK **1.55** Film: The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2000)
2.55 FYI Daily **3.00** Film: The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas (2000) **3.45** Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50** Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **5.25** Film: King Kong (2005) **6.25** FYI Daily **6.30** Film: King Kong (2005) **9.00** Film: The Bourne Supremacy (2004) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: The Bourne Supremacy (2004) **11.15** Family Guy: An Evening with Sammy Davis Jr. **12.05** Safeworld **2.40** The Hot Desk: Caroline Lake **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2
Nightscreen

ITV3
11.15 Inspector Morse **6.05** Midsummer Murders **8.00** Doc Martin **9.00** Midsummer Murders **11.00** Lewis **1.05** Blue Murder **2.00** TV Catchup Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 Film: Shalako (1968) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15** Film: Shalako (1968) **1.20** Sporting Funnies **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Sandown. Coverage of races from Sandown Racecourse. **4.40** News **4.50** Stars **6.50** Mr Bean **8.00** River Monsters **9.00** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **11.15** Film: On Deadly Ground (1994) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20** Film: On Deadly Ground (1994) **1.00** Tommy Cooper **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen

E4
11.05 Black-ish **12.00** Film: A Monster in Paris (2011) **1.45** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.00** The Goldbergs **4.40** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Comedy Central Presents **10.00** The Mindy Project **10.30** Welcome to 2017 **3.25** New Girl **4.40** Suburgatory **4.55** Revenge

Film4
11.00 Thunderbirds Are Go! (1966) **1.00** The Family Stone (2005) **3.05** Fast Girls (2012) **4.50** Young Sherlock Holmes (1985) **7.00** Volcano (1997) **9.00** The Hurricane (1999) **10.00** Catching Fire (2012) **11.45** Baskin (2015) **1.40** Wake in Fright (1971) **4.40** Close

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CHOICE



Ashley Banjo (left)

Dance Dance Dance (ITV, 6.30pm)
New series. Alesha Dixon and Will Best host a celebrity dance contest. The show features five famous contestants, who are unconfirmed at the time of going to press, each of whom will be paired with a dance partner. The couples will take on the challenge of recreating iconic dance routines featured in movies or music videos. Ashley Banjo, leader of street dance troupe Diversity, and choreographers Tina Landon and Timor Steffens make up the panel of expert judges who will be assessing their talents on the dance floor.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30 MOTD:** FA Cup Highlights. (R) **9.00 The Andrew Marr Show.** **10.00 The Big Questions.** **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00 Bargain Hunt.** (R) **1.00 BBC News: Weather.** **1.15 Songs of Praise.** **1.50** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.35 Life in the Show.** (R) **3.35 Match of the Day Live:** The FA Cup. Tottenham Hotspur v Aston Villa (Kick-off 4.00pm).
6.05 BBC News.
6.20 Regional Programme.
6.30 Countryfile. Matt Baker examines how the Shropshire landscape has been shaped by the history of mining, and Anita Rani visits a camping site that has been set up in a scrap yard. Adam Henson presents the first in a series of reports from New Zealand. Charlotte Smith examines a rise in dementia in rural communities, and chief Michael Caines goes camping in Dartmoor. Including weather for the week ahead.
7.30 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents a second visit to Tewkesbury Abbey in Gloucestershire. The experts examine a heavy Tudor table that requires six men to move it, an extensive collection of Maundy money, a signed picture of Chairman Mao by Andy Warhol, and a rare 18th-century painted silk dress that has been left in a dressing up box for 50 years.
8.30 Still Open All Hours. Eric, Cyril and Mr Newbold try to prove they have it in them to be exciting, while Granville tries to shift a consignment of mints that are past their sell by date.
9.00 Sherlock. The detective faces a dangerous new enemy in the seemingly unassailable Culverton Smith, a man whose position of power conceals a terrible secret. Estranged from John, Sherlock must confront his demons to defeat his enemy's plans. Toby Jones guest stars as the villain.
10.30 BBC News.
10.50 Regional Programme.
11.00 MOTD: FA Cup Highlights. A review of the latest third-round matches, featuring Tottenham Hotspur v Aston Villa and Liverpool v Plymouth Argyle or Newport County.
12.05 The Celebrity Apprentice USA. **1.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **6.55** Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.55** An Island Parish. (R) **8.25 The Edible Garden.** (R) **8.55 Countryfile.** (R) **9.55** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. (R) **11.25** The Good Cook. (R) **11.55** Tom Kerridge's Proper Pub Food. (R) **12.25** Richard Harris: Talking Pictures. (R) **1.00 Film:** Cromwell. (1970) Historical drama, starring Richard Harris and Alec Guinness. **3.15** Flog It! (R) **4.15** Life in Polar Bear Town with Gordon Buchanan. (R) **5.15** Yellowstone: The Wildest Winter. (R)
6.15 Ski Sunday. All the news, gossip and action from the piste.
7.00 School Swap: Korea Style. Part one of two. Three teenagers from Pembrokeshire swap their classrooms, teachers and parents for a school in South Korea, which boasts one of the best education systems in the world – and one of the toughest. For three days, they live and breathe Korean education to find out the secret to its success. Can they hack it? Sian Griffiths presents.
8.00 Dragons' Den. Evan Davis presents the business ideas contest, with panellists Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Touker Suleyman, Sarah Williamson and Nick Jenkins examining the profit-making potential of inflatable igloos, a restaurant serving meat-free hot dogs, and a new kind of poop-cooper. Presented by Evan Davis.
9.00 Thailand: Earth's Tropical Paradise. Exploring the forests, plains and bustling cities of Central Thailand, an area known as the nation's rice bowl. The programme explores how people live alongside animals in these areas, and the spiritual fulfilment to be found in these relationships. Narrated by Sophie Okonedo.
10.00 Film: A Most Violent Year. (2014) Premiere. An immigrant living in New York in 1981 struggles to keep his business going against an unrelenting rise in violent crime. Thriller, with Oscar Isaac and Jessica Chastain.
12.00 QI XL. With Phill Jupitus, Holly Walsh and Nish Kumar. **12.45** Sign Zone: Countryfile. Anita Rani visits Malham Cove in the Yorkshire Dales, where she climbs a cliff face and meets an artist pursuing a family tradition. (R) **1.45** Holby City. (R) **2.40** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Super 4. (R) **7.15** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Oddbods. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.55** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Film: Carry On Up the Jungle. (1970) **11.15** Chopping Block. (R) **12.15** ITV News. **12.25** Tipping Point. (R) **1.25** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **2.30** The Voice UK. (R) **4.00** The Big Soap Quiz: Coronation Street vs Emmerdale. (R) **5.00** Regional Programme. **5.15** ITV News. **5.30** Unbelievable Moments Caught on Camera. Alastair Stewart presents a selection of extraordinary eyewitness footage filmed by members of the public, featuring a wedding that was ruined by a sandstorm, the rescue of a fox cub from a drain, cyclists being chased by an ostrich, a train that crashed into a truck at a level crossing, a paraglider's painful crash landing, and a musical moment that raised thousands for charity and started an 80-year-old grandfather's recording career.
6.30 Dance Dance Dance. New series. Alesha Dixon and Will Best host a dance contest in which celebrities recreate famous routines from movies and music videos to impress a panel of expert judges.
8.00 Endeavour. New series. In the summer of 1967, Morse and Thursday are both devastated by Joan's abrupt departure from Oxford. The young detective responds to his loss by throwing himself into his work, investigating the suspicious drowning of a scientist who was part of a research team working on an early computer. At first it appears to be a simple suicide – until two more bodies are found in the river.
10.00 ITV News: Weather.
10.15 Robson Crusoe: A Surprising Adventure. Inspired by Daniel Defoe's classic novel Robinson Crusoe, cameras follow actor and presenter Robson Green as he fends for himself on a desert island in the South China Sea. (R)
11.10 Premiership Rugby Union. **12.05** Jackpot247. **3.00** Chopping Block. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Darts: BDO Lakeside World Professional Championships. The second day of the BDO World Championships. **5.30** Find It, Fix It, Flog It. (R)
6.15 Channel 4 News.
6.30 Britain's Wildest Weather 2016. Footage of unusual weather conditions recorded in Britain during 2016, and exploring the factors that led to these incidents. The programme features footage recorded by people caught in the middle of floods, super-storms, tornadoes and lightning strikes, as well as a look at how a record level El Niño effect altered Britain's weather. (R)
8.00 Walking the Americas. New series. Levison Wood goes on a four-month trek across Central America, travelling 1,800 miles from Mexico to Colombia. The journey begins in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, where he and his guide Alberto explore the remains of the Mayan Civilisation, including a sinkhole containing the remains of sacrificial victims. They move on to the island of San Pedro and the jungles where Levison was trained as a soldier, before braving the lawless wilderness of El Peten in Guatemala, where most of America's cocaine is trafficked.
9.00 Film: The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1. (2014) Premiere. Katniss Everdeen is brought to a secretive underground society following the destruction of the televised deathmatch. She becomes the figurehead of a revolution against the despotic Panem regime, while her friend Peeta remains a captive of its tyrannical president. Part one of the two-part conclusion to the sci-fi adventure series, starring Jennifer Lawrence.
11.20 The Big Fat Quiz of Everything. Jonathan Ross, David Walliams, Katherine Ryan, Aisling Bea, Noel Fielding and Richard Ayoade answer Jimmy Carr's questions on the past 100,000 years of human history. (R)
1.25 How to Lose Weight Well. (R) **2.25** The Secret Life of a Year Olds. (R) **3.15** The Autistic Gardener. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.10** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.25** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.35** Zack and Quack. (R) **6.50** Seaside Antics. (R) **6.55** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.10** Pip Ahoy! (R) **7.30** Little Princess. (R) **7.45** Big Bash Cricket Live. Hobart Hurricanes v Melbourne Stars. **11.30** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **12.30** Film: Holy Man. (1998) Satirical comedy, starring Eddie Murphy. **2.35** Film: The Kid. (2000) Disney comedy, starring Bruce Willis. **4.35** Film: Legally Blonde. (2001) Comedy, starring Reese Witherspoon.
6.25 Film: Along Came Polly. (2004) An obsessively cautious man, whose wife left him on their honeymoon, crosses paths with a wildly spontaneous former classmate who throws his well-ordered routine into disarray. Yet in spite of their different outlooks on life, he starts to fall for her. Romantic comedy, starring Ben Stiller, Jennifer Aniston, Debra Messing, Hank Azaria, Alec Baldwin and Philip Seymour Hoffman. Edited for language and sexual content.
8.00 Kittens Make You Laugh Out Loud. Compilation of internet videos featuring kittens doing bizarre and humorous things.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. A chance to catch up with the latest events inside the house as the celebrities cope with living under constant surveillance, with all the arguments and alliances, as well as the revelations in the diary room.
10.00 Celebrity Botched Up Bodies. Leading surgeons repair household names damaged by cosmetic surgery.
11.05 The BAFTA Britannia Awards 2016. Coverage of the movie awards ceremony, with Jodie Foster, Ricky Gervais, Ang Lee, Samuel L. Jackson, Felicity Jones and Ewan McGregor among those receiving honours.
1.00 SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** A New Life in Oz. British families emigrating to Australia. (R) **4.00** Now That's Funny! Internet-sourced videos with an amusing family friendly hook. (R) **4.50** Divine Designs. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. The children make cards. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 David Starkey's Music & Monarchy
8.00 Sword, Musket & Machine Gun: Britain's Armed History
9.00 Horizon: The Trouble with Space Junk
10.00 The Sky at Night
10.30 Film: Venus in Fur (2013)
12.00 Killer Whales: Beneath the Surface – Natural World
2.00 The Magic of Mushrooms
2.00 Lost Kingdoms of Central America
3.00 Boxing at the Movies: Kings of the Ring
4.00 Close
ITV2
11.30 The Voice UK
1.00 2Awesome: 2Awesome
1.05 2Awesome: Guidance
1.40 2Awesome: Side Effects
2.20 2Awesome: Third Wheel
2.40 2Awesome: LA Story
3.00 Film: Nanny McPhee (2005)
4.00 FYI Daily
4.05 Film: Nanny McPhee (2005)
5.10 Minion Madness
5.10 Film: Despicable Me 2 (2013)
6.15 FYI Daily
6.15 Film: Despicable Me 2 (2013)
7.15 FYI Daily
8.20 Film: The Amazing Spider-Man 2 (2014)
10.00 Family Guy
10.55 American Dad!
12.25 The Cleveland Show
1.25 Release the Hounds
2.15 Teleshopping
5.45 ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
8.00 This Time Next Year
9.00 Tonight at the London Palladium
10.00 Birds of a Feather
10.30 Inspector Morse
12.50 A Touch of Frost
2.30 Wycliffe
3.30 May the Best House Win
5.15 You're Only Young Twice
5.40 ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
11.40 Pawn Stars
1.30 Film: Apache (1954)
2.35 FYI Daily
2.40 Film: Apache (1954)
3.20 Film: Red River (1948)
4.25 FYI Daily
4.30 Film: Red River (1948)
6.00 Film: 633 Squadron (1964)
7.05 FYI Daily
7.10 Film: 633 Squadron (1964)
8.00 Premiership Rugby Union
9.00 Film: The Krays (1990)
10.05 FYI Daily
10.10 Film: The Krays (1990)
11.30 Film: Don't Say a Word (2001)
12.35 FYI Daily
12.40 Film: Don't Say a Word (2001)
1.45 Hell on Wheels
E4
3.00 The Big Bang Theory
6.30 The Big Bang Theory: Hawking's 75th Birthday
9.00 Film: Bullet to the Head (2012)
10.50 Tattoo Fixers
11.55 Virtually Famous
12.45 Gogglebox
1.50 Rude Tube: Love Bytes
2.45 Rude Tube
3.15 New Girl
3.35 Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery (1966)
1.00 The Spy Next Door (2010)
2.50 The Two Faces of January (2014)
4.45 Mission: Impossible (1996)
6.55 The Jane Austen Book Club (2007)
9.00 The Railway Man (2013)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Unwanted Guest, Channel 5, 3.15pm

With nowhere to go for winter break, Amy is invited to spend time with her friend Christine's family. What begins as a nice bonding experience soon turns into a nightmare as Amy begins to lash out at her welcoming hosts. Thriller, starring Kate Mansi and Valentina Novakovic. (2016)

TUESDAY

Dangerous Lessons, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A high school teacher breaks the cardinal rule of not getting romantically involved with one of her students. However, when she tells him it's over, the boy begins to demonstrate psychotic, obsessive behaviour, and starts to stalk both her and her family. Thriller, starring Louise Lombard and Alex Esola. (2016)

WEDNESDAY

The Other Man, BBC1, 11.45pm

After his wife's death, a man learns she was having an affair when he discovers provocative photos of her with another man. He resolves to track down her lover and exact his revenge, but when he confronts the man about his misdeeds, he instead strikes up an unlikely friendship, making him question whether he should continue with his vengeful scheme. Drama, starring Liam Neeson and Antonio Banderas. (2008)



The Other Man, Wednesday, BBC1, 11.45pm

THURSDAY

A Mother's Fear, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A single mother resolves to discover the cause of her son's mysterious illness. Her investigation leads her to a corporation involved in genetically modified food and two scientists who are on the verge of a groundbreaking new discovery. Drama, starring Zoe Lister-Jones, Danny Glover and Victor Garber. (2015)

FRIDAY

Sexy Beast, Channel 4, 12.10am

A retired safe-breaker enjoying the high life in Spain becomes the target of unwanted attention when his psychotic former gangland boss comes looking to enlist his help and expertise for a major bank robbery in London. Crime thriller, starring Ray Winstone, Ben Kingsley, Ian McShane and Amanda Redman. (2000)

New series is hoping to be a Class above

Sometimes it's hard to be a Doctor Who fan...

The past 12 months have been particularly difficult thanks to the fact that no full series of the much-loved drama had headed our way. Instead, we've had to make do with the Christmas special, which was a lot of fun, but it's just not the same as having several adventures spread over a couple of months to get your teeth into.

However, one little ray of sunshine was the appearance of Class, a spin-off available on BBC Three. Sadly, there are some of us who still can't get to the grips of watching programmes online, or who don't have the technology to watch it via our TVs, so we feel we've missed out.

Thankfully, the Beeb has deemed it worthy of a proper, terrestrial broadcast, so three cheers for them.

Of course, it isn't the first time a Whovian spin-off has featured in the schedules. Way back in 1981 we were treated to K-9 and Company, in which former companion Sarah

Jane Smith (Elisabeth Sladen) was meant to embark on adventures with the Time Lord's popular robot dog. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a lacklustre affair that didn't get past the pilot stage.

Sladen returned in The Sarah Jane Adventures 26 years later, and that was a success, running for five series until the actress's death in 2011.

And then there was Torchwood, a far more grown-up approach to sci-fi, which ran for four years; fans were devastated when it came to an end and long for it to return. It has, after a fashion, via Big Finish, a company that produces Doctor Who audio adventures. The company has also backed other spin-offs featuring characters from the series.

Class may one day be a project for them too, but for now, it's a visual feast written by young adult writer Patrick Ness, who said of the series before its first air date in October: "There are many, many secrets to come. Many. Like, a lot. But of course, the Doctor is in episode one! That's how these things are done."

"Truly, though, I can't wait for everyone to see the show; we've worked so hard and I'm so proud of it."

Peter Capaldi added: "The Doctor Who family is growing, and it's fantastic to be able to welcome the young new cast of Class in to the Whoniverse."

The main setting for the drama is Coal Hill Academy, which long-standing fans will be aware has been part of Doctor Who since its earliest days – it featured in the very first episode, An Unearthly Child, back in 1963, when it was known as Coal Hill School and was attended by the Doctor's granddaughter, Susan. It's appeared since too – it's the school where Clara Oswald was a teacher.

Now it's Miss Quill (played by Katherine Kelly) who takes centre stage, along with four students who are entrusted by the Doctor to keep all alien threats at bay.

Fun and lively, it's a must for Whovians of all ages.



Sophie Hopkins and Greg Austin star, Class, Monday, BBC1, 10.45pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

The Halcyon

ITV, 9pm

Lady Hamilton wants Freddie to use his leave from the RAF to support her with the hotel and it becomes clear she wants to make changed and that Garland is in her sights. The hotel manager insists he's not worried and that he just needs to show how indispensable he is, but Peggy and Feldman aren't so sure, while Charity meets Joe and reveals her plans for revenge, but he refuses to help her, and Emma and Betsy hit the town. Drama, starring Olivia Williams, Steven Mackintosh, Jamie Blackley and Mark Benton.

TUESDAY

Sugar Free Farm

ITV, 9pm

Seven celebrities submit to a diet free from sugar, refined carbs, processed fats and cheap meat. From the moment they take up residence in a farmworkers' cottage, they're put to work to earn all the healthy food they eat. TV presenter Alison Hammond cooks from scratch with natural ingredients, comedian Joe Pasquale discovers an aptitude for pig husbandry, and ex MP Ann Widdecombe overcomes an aversion to whole grains. However, while Peter Davison, Stavros

Flatley are also put through their paces, reality star Gemma Collins has trouble handling the farm work.

WEDNESDAY

Hospital

BBC2, 9pm

New series. A six-part series capturing the day-to-day realities that face the NHS in unprecedented times. With an ever-increasing demand on its various services, the programme shows the real-life dilemmas and tough decisions that hospital staff and patients alike have to endure. In the first episode, two patients await life-saving surgery at St Mary's Hospital in Paddington - both need to be in the intensive card ward, but the hospital is at full capacity and there is only one bed remaining.

Common Sense

BBC2, 10pm

New series. Topical, fast-paced comedy news series voiced by Ruth Jones, featuring a regular cast of real British people, including dinner ladies from Leeds, East End market traders, supermarket co-workers, launderette owners and butchers from Birmingham. Chosen for their

sharp wit and humorous take on life, the cast offer their honest and unfiltered thoughts on some of the biggest talking points of the week, from major breaking stories and bizarre headlines, to the worlds of sport and popular culture.

THURSDAY

Spy in the Wild

BBC1, 8pm

New series. Natural history documentary in which spy cameras camouflaged as various animals go 'undercover' in the animal world, getting up close and personal to film their behaviour. Spy Pup is immersed in wild dog life to explore their maternal love, and Spy Penguin records the turbulent action of the mating season, as a male Adelle penguin falls victim to a pebble thief that ruins his chances of love for the season. Spy Tortoise and Spy Bushbaby keep



Sugar Free Farm, Tuesday, ITV, 9pm

watch on chimpanzees, while in perhaps the most moving scenes, Spy Monkey becomes the focus of attention for a troop of concerned langurs who believe the motionless camera-creature has died.

FRIDAY

Big Dreams Small Spaces

BBC2, 7pm

Monty Don helps Tariq and Sairah, who want to turn their dumping ground of a backyard in Leyton into a sumptuous award-winning garden suitable for entertaining friends and family, and a trip to Chelsea Flower Show proves inspirational. Ant and Jake in Bath want to create a Japanese-style design for their L-shaped plot, but events take a dramatic turn when they discover an underlying problem with their soil that calls for an extreme solution.

Room 101

BBC1, 8.30pm

Frank Skinner presents the comedy panel show, returning for the sixth series of this reincarnation, which sees three – as opposed to just one – celebrities venting their spleen about people and objects that upset them, vying for supremacy. Lining up for battle in this edition are comedy actress Catherine Tate, X Factor contender-turned-television host Rylan Clark-Neal and actor Nigel Havers.

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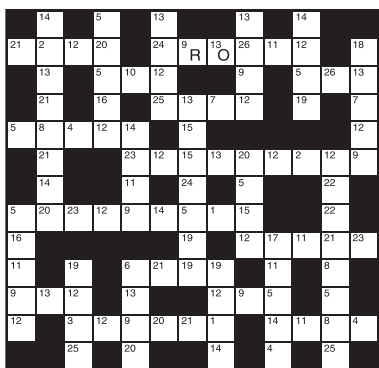
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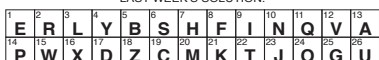
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

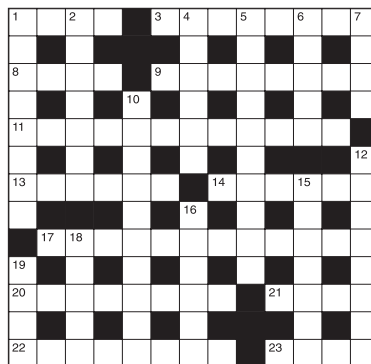
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- 1 & 7Dn. A verge on the road for the team having to travel (4,4)
3. Hire pots for prizes (8)
8. Green on a charge! (4)
9. Gave information showing what the divorcee said (8)
11. The results of a party game (12)
13. Attempt to have a meal inside by agreement (6)
14. Seasoned meat for Sarah and friend in France (6)
17. Another purchase of stock - piece of harness and clothing (12)
20. Geographical measurement that shows a certain tolerance (8)
21. See 6 Down
22. A person without doubt (8)
23. Puts in the right type for the series (4)

Down

1. Legal man to make a recommendation (8)
2. Organise a place for shooting practice, we hear (7)
4. Strange tailless feline creates a disturbance (6)
5. They provide the simple truth (5,5)
- 6 & 21Ac. Where you'll find the sailor answering a charge (2,3,4)
7. See 1 Across
- 10 & 16Dn. Becoming irritated when being inoculated (7,3,6)
12. It's not right in manufactured brands to find errors (8)
15. Mean to amend a single bloomer (7)
16. See 10 Down
18. Commend highly in the next Olympics (5)
19. One in a black suit produces a blunt instrument (4)



Quick Clues:

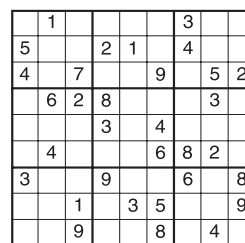
Across

1. Draw (4)
3. Banter (8)
8. Wealthy (4)
9. Bulge (8)
11. Loving (12)
13. Profession (6)
14. Share (6)
17. Cheekiness (12)
20. Remove (8)
21. Retired (4)
22. Rider (8)
23. Carry (4)

Down

1. Mode of speech (8)
2. Satan (7)
4. Scared (6)
5. Designs (10)
6. Grown-up (5)
7. A paradise (4)
10. Speed up (10)
12. Protector (8)
15. Base (7)
16. Layers (6)
18. Manufacturer (5)
19. Craving (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

9	1	7	5	8	3	2	6	4
6	3	4	1	2	7	9	8	5
5	8	2	6	9	4	3	7	1
4	5	9	8	6	1	7	3	2
3	6	1	9	7	2	5	4	8
2	7	8	4	3	5	1	9	6
8	4	5	3	1	9	6	2	7
7	9	6	2	5	8	4	1	3
1	2	3	7	4	6	8	5	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Head waiters; 9 Peppers; 10 Reach; 11 Rolls; 12 Elector; 13 Pastry; 15 Dearth; 18 Inertia; 20 Outdo; 22 Titan; 23 Private; 24 Anachronism. Down: 2 Expert; 3 Dresser; 4 Answer; 5 Three; 6 Reactor; 7 Appropriate; 8 Church tower; 14 Sweeten; 16 Erosion; 17 Sapper; 19 Tonic; 21 Tears. QUICK - Across: 1 On probation; 9 Idiotic; 10 Motor; 11 Piece; 12 Emotion; 13 Effete; 15 Grieve; 18 Seaport; 20 Clean; 22 Ratio; 23 Artless; 24 Incredulity. Down: 2 Noise; 3 Retreat; 4 Bicker; 5 Tempo; 6 Outside; 7 Displeasure; 8 Drunkenness; 14 Flatten; 16 Recital; 17 Strand; 19 Odour; 21 Erect.

Quiz

1. Of which animal is the babirusa a wild variety?
2. Who replaced Jack Straw as Home Secretary in 2001?
3. Which museum is now on the site of 'Bedlam' Hospital?
4. Which film comic was born William Claude Dukenfield?
5. Which ocean has the largest tidal range?
6. Which flower is named after the French for lion's tooth?
7. What has the same tune as the US's America (My Country, 'Tis Of Thee)?
8. Who succeeded Joe Royle as manager of Manchester City??
9. Which record producer was famous for his Wall of Sound?
10. What are used in the Rorschach test?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Sikhism; 2 Harlem Globetrotters; 3 Joule; 4 John Denver; 5 Osborne House; 6 James II; 7 Jeremy Irons; 8 Buddy Holly; 9 New Jersey; 10 Zubin Mehta. Niner: FALTERING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

574526852 gives an Italian painter,
53674 gives an Italian city,
13482 gives an Italian province.



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FOR so many people, quality, locally-sourced food is high on the priority list when they are thinking about where to stay.

Cue Bodnant Welsh Food Centre and Cookery School in North Wales, helping the country to establish its growing reputation as a nation of passionate producers and fanatical foodies.

Situated just a stone's throw from the sea-side town of Conwy, the centre was established in 2012 to provide the showcase for the best Welsh food such as fresh meat from the local valleys and hills.

It is set in a cluster of stone farm buildings dating back to the 18th century, which have been lovingly restored to house a host of businesses, all of which champion the best products from the local area.

On site is a farm shop, selling products sourced from the surrounding Bodnant estate, from award-winning Welsh suppliers and the in-house bakery, butchers and dairy. This food is also used to supply the elegant on-site Hay-

By James Pugh

loft Restaurant, intimate River Room and Furnace Tea Room. My wife and I stayed in one of the five on-site bedrooms, which boast stunning views over the Conwy Estuary.

The comfortable accommodation has been finished with stylish furnishings, ironwork lights and Welsh handmade fabrics as well as the usual mod cons. It also benefits from an impressive communal kitchen and living room. Staying over is an excellent excuse to make use of both the Hayloft and River Room, where chefs make the best possible use of Bodnant's ingredients.

The menu is changed regularly to suit the seasons and boasts generous portions. Typical dishes in the Hayloft include a 'festival of Welsh lamb', 'soused Llandudno mackerel' and 'peaches and Bodnant ice cream' – all reasonably priced and served with wines from Bodnant's own cellar.

Alternatively, The River Room restaurant offers an intimate and informal fine dining experience with a unique seven-course tast-

ing menu, each course refined and carefully selected by Andrew Sheridan. The restaurant, which provides a fine dining experience for just 12 guests per evening, was the brain-child of Mr Sheridan. It was this we got the pleasure of sampling during our stay.

Each dish was immaculately presented and bursting with flavours, including the mackerel and wood pigeon which I had never tried before. The mix of pre-chosen white and red wines, optional with the tasting menu, accompanied the main dishes perfectly.

Ambition

Mr Sheridan, who has trained alongside Michelin-starred chef Michael Caines, said: "The River Room was the realisation of a personal ambition to make fine dining more accessible to people. I passionately believe that everyone should have the opportunity to experience top quality food."

"The idea behind The River Room is to combine fine dining with an informal atmosphere. There is absolutely no pretence here – guests don't need to worry about wearing a formal jacket or which cutlery to choose."

Just like the food, the service was first-class, with the knowledgeable waiter introducing each dish and wine.

Breakfast the following morning in the Hayloft restaurant was equally appetising. The venue also boasts a function room for weddings and other events and the Welsh National Bee-keeping Centre – as well as its impressive Cookery School, which again promotes local ingredients.

Courses tie in with what is in season, catering for just what you fancy all around the year, with classes varying from bread-making to tapas fusion, skilled patisserie and dinner party dishes. Bodnant's sessions come highly recommended for chefs of all levels – and would certainly make an ideal gift for a food enthusiast.

For those seeking a little more adventure, there is plenty of exploration to be done in the rugged local landscape of Snowdonia, a sanctuary for outdoors enthusiasts and adventure seekers. Situated in quiet estate surroundings, in the heart of Conwy Valley, the Bodnant Welsh Food Centre offers something for everyone.

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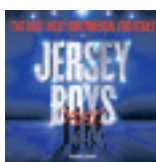
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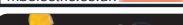
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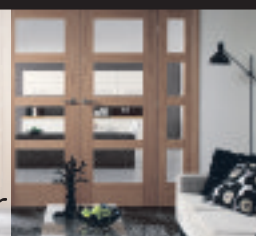
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SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady young looking, 60s, genuine and kind seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424671

HI Gents, I'm Kelly, a down to earth lady, 35yrs, shapely brunette, seeking someone with GSOH, looks unimportant, any age. ACA, I promise! Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 423055

HELEN, mid 50's naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424493

NAUGHTY curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter, WLTm chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box 424543

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424775

SARAH, 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 408291

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425339

MELINDA, 52yrs, attractive and broad minded seeking chap any age for some fun. Couples also. Text only Mailbox: 4131946

KATHERINE, 28, tall, slim, dark, blue eyed female with many interests, OHAC, WLTm interesting male for dates, and more. Single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425287

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

TRACY, 41, outgoing sun worshiper, OHAC, employed, looking for her Prince Charming to enjoy romantic holidays and good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425257

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

SHARON 36yr old single mum looking for loving guy who will appreciate me and help repair my broken heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425283

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399

SHELLEY slim N/S 40's female who likes the simple things in life so no big gestures required, seeking lovely loving male for hopeful LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425253

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

Single Men

THAI female 39, very beautiful, petite and self sufficient, loves cooking and home making, looking for caring, kind man/singl dad. Please call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425191

PROFESSIONAL lady, mid 60s, interests include gardening, theatre, walking, days out and travelling, animal lover, looking for a professional gentleman, kind and caring, intellectual and outgoing, with gosh, for friendship possibly more, in the Stafford area. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424569

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424777

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTm interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424675

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424781

LOUISE, 29, curvy red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425041

KAREN, 47, an attractive blue-eyed redhead, curvy size 16, likes films, football, pubs, reading, seeking like-minded male for nights in/out, hopefully more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425057

JULIE attractive 35yr old female with a great body, looking for no strings attached evening meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425037

MARY, passionate honest slim blue-eyed blonde, 39yrs, likes nights in/out, looking for affectionate male, any age to spend adult fun times. Interested? call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425009

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424491

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, winning dining. Age unimportant. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425337

JOSIE, sexy black lady, 52yrs seeks adult times with concerning gent, any age, discreet clean, womanly figure. Text only Mailbox: 4028592

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425327

ANNABELLE, sophisticated 28yrs hoping to meet older gent for adult fun, discreet, sincere, genuine admirer. Text only Mailbox: 4157105

LOVING lady romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425325

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425323

ANDREA, 43, slim with long dark hair, blue eyes, loves to dance seeks romantic man to share intimate moments in or out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425221

CAROL mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told) Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424783

THELMA, 59, slim, petite and Afro Caribbean, GSOH, trustworthy, honest and very caring, leave me your details if that sounds good to you! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425195

SARAH, young looking curvy 41yr old female, bored with everyday routines. WLTm up for some fun discreet and extremely broadminded younger male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424827

DEBBIE, 50, petite blonde looking for some fun and adventure with similar fun loving mature male. Looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424799

CALL or text me, I'm Claire, single, 41yrs loves life to the full, hoping you will contact me if you want a genuine fun time. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424779

JANE 40's, blonde blue-eyed petite build, WLTm understanding discreet tall, caring man for daytime meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424769

DONNA, 42, bright bubbly blue eyed blonde looking for someone to enjoy life and love to the full with. Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424873

SUE, attractive genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424673

RETIRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, seeks tall, funny, kind chap, Shropshire. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459

SUZANNA, 45, lonely beautiful classy French lady looking for happy decent reliable very sexy man for lots of TLC and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424847

Single Men

MALE 63, widower, Irish, GSOH, tall, independent, seeks special lady. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409243

MALE 65, GSOH, seeks female for friendship and companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418389

TOM, 32, slim, attractive, own home, likes to eat out and in, WLTm honest, kind girl for tender, loving care and fun times. No time wasters please. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424929

JAY, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425345

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425343

IAN, 518, medium build, OHAC, late 50s, likes most things, holidays, gardening, motorbikes, WLTm similar aged lady, 50-60, with nice personality. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421345

MATURE male, 70s, tall, retired, recovering alcoholic, WLTm some understanding, maybe in the same situation for friendship and mutual support. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425263

YOUNG looking 63 year old male, GSOH, friendly, considerate, attractive, looking for a naughty female, any age/status, for adult fun and friendship. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425243

IRISH gent, 66, GSOH, n/s, wishes to meet lady, North, Birmingham area, for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425269

JAMES, 59, 5ft11, average build, WLTm a Christian lady, 60-70, for companionship. Hope to hear from you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425227

IRISH male, 62, 5ft 9ins, GSOH, independent, seeks genuine female for friendship initially. Birmingham area. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403623

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4

Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

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pets corner

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some simple guidelines you can
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Farmer:

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puppy whilst it is still with it's
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than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any
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of advertisements from Puppy
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liability should readers
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weeks old, all vaccines. Mom and Dad
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Motoring

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cars under £1500

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£950 ono.

07858 240742.



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07515 770277.

cars over £1500

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£1,999.

0787 9403302.



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public & legal notices

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Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 95 Windsor Road Halesowen West Midlands B63 4BH, who died on 27/11/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 10/03/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice. SILKS SOLICITORS LIMITED 27 Birmingham Street Oldbury West Midlands B68 4DY. T492003

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ClassifiedAds

New sport tourer's dynamic abilities

By John Griffiths

Renault's designers and engineers must have been working overtime, with the car making rolling out probably the newest range of cars in the market.

The new Scenic, Grand Scenic and this model, the Mégane Sport Tourer hit the streets of Britain at the same time.

And these are not just minor upgrades – a new wing mirror here, a revamped grille there – but are virtually all new cars, with new designs, and some of the latest technology.

The Sport Tourer doesn't offer too many surprises, being a logical follow-up to the new Mégane hatchback which first appeared five months ago. It is, of course, at the rear with its large and practical cargo space where the main difference lies.

The range of petrol and diesel engines are well-proven – like the hatchback the range topper is the 205PS GT – and of course the Sport Tourer also comes with the unique four wheel steering system which both sharpens up the handling at speed and makes it easier to park.

The new car is longer and lower than its predecessor, with the wheels set wider apart too, which both adds to the car's sporty stance and creates more room inside. It can accommodate up to five adults in comfort, with a generous 521 litres of luggage space. With one or two on board and the rear seats folded, that leaves a large, square 1,504 litres of space for cargo. The boot floor has two positions, the higher one creating a flat load floor with space underneath for those items to be hidden from prying eyes.

The first impression of driving the car is that it's a very relaxing car: switchgear is logical and simple, its controls are light, it's quiet, rides smoothly and its dynamic abilities inspire confidence.

The first test car was a 1,500cc, 110PS diesel which may prove popular particularly with business users for its economy – an official average of 76.4mpg and 96g/km which makes it cheaper to run at the pumps as well as when your tax bill arrives.

It's performance figures (0 to 62mph in 11.3 seconds) somewhat belies its real world abilities, both in terms of in-gear acceleration and laid back, unfussed cruising. If you're regularly carrying heavy loads of people or cargo, the 130 turbo diesel might suit better. It's a little quicker, of course, at little sacrifice in terms of economy (70.6mpg and 104g/km).

For those who prefer petrol, the entry-level 1.2 litre unit is turbocharged so it also offers 130PS as well as a generous helping to torque to achieve that relaxed performance feel.

The interior has a quality feel, with a fascia which is relatively simple and uncluttered despite the large number of the latest electronic safety and driver assistance systems, as many of them are controlled via the central touch screen. On higher grade models, the seven inch screen is replaced by an 8.7 inch, portrait style screen – a feature only usually found on much more expensive models. It's clear and intuitive to use, much like a smartphone, and as well as a wide range of car system settings it controls the connectivity, audio and (where fitted) navigation system.

It's also the hub of the Renault 'Multi-sense' system which allows the driver to select throttle and engine response, engine sound, steering weight and ambient lighting, among other things, to suit them or the conditions.

The 4Control system sets the Méganes apart. At lower speeds the computer controlled system allows the rear wheels to turn a couple of degrees in the opposite direction to those at the front, endowing it with the manoeuvrability of a small city car. On the



RENAULT MEGANE SPORT TOURER, FROM £18,550 - £27,450

The new car is longer and lower than its predecessor with the wheels set wider apart

open road, the rear wheels turn by just one degree in the same direction as the front. It doesn't sound much, but its ability to help the Mégane tackle quick corners with extra stability and traction is noticeable.

It's one of those technical features you probably won't think about, but it does add to the driving experience – none more so than on the sporting flagship of the range, the 205PS GT. We're used to quick Méganes and this one doesn't disappoint, with a 0 to 62mph sprint time of just 7.4 seconds. Mated to Renault's quick acting and intelligent six-speed automated dual clutch transmission,

it's in-gear performance impresses, too.

The power plant is a 1,600cc petrol turbo, with a hefty 260Nm of torque at just 1,750rpm adding considerably to the 205PS of power when it comes to get up and go. Fuel consumption can average, according to official figures, a not unreasonable 47.1mpg for a performance car, with a 134g/km of CO2.

It comes, of course, fully equipped as a flagship model with sporting additions such as full LED headlights, chrome sill plates, 18-inch alloys, and leather upholstery. The suspension is updated, too.

Standard features across the range include

a traction and stability control, understeer control, emergency brake assist, and six airbags. All but the entry level Expression+ model also have Renault's Visio system which includes lane departure warning, traffic sign recognition and automatic high/low beam lights. Air conditioning is also standard, with dual zone climate control on higher grade models along with such features as automatic headlamps and wipers, parking sensors, adaptive cruise control, electrically adjustable and heated mirrors, and satellite navigation.

All new Renaults come with a four year, 100,000 mile warranty.



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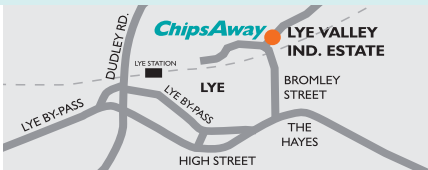
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MOTURING

Škoda manufactures two million cars at Kvasiny



Škoda has now built two million vehicles at the Kvasiny plant. The milestone vehicle – a Škoda Kodiaq in Moon White – rolled off the production line at the traditional Czech company's site.

"Kvasiny is a state-of-the-art production facility with a great tradition and an outstanding team. As an important cornerstone of Škoda's production network, the Kvasiny plant will be making a key contribution to Škoda Strategy 2025," says Škoda board member for production and logistics Michael Oeljeklaus.

Increase

"The site's annual production volume will continue to increase over the coming years. To this end, we will be investing heavily into the location, expanding Kvasiny into a competence centre for the production of SUV vehicles among other things.

"We have recently reached an important milestone in this regard by launching production of the Škoda Kodiaq."

The Kvasiny plant has a tradition spanning the last 80 years, and is one of the most important employers in the

Hradec Králové region. Cars such as the JAWA 700 were produced here as early as the 1930s.

The first Škoda to be manufactured at Kvasiny was the Škoda Superb in 1947. In subsequent years, the models Felicia (1958 to 1964), 110 R Coupé (1970 to 1980), Škoda pickup / VW Caddy pickup (1995 to 2001), Superb, Roomster and Yeti ran off the production line.

The Škoda plant in East Bohemia is currently undergoing the most significant modernisation and expansion in its history.

As part of the comprehensive SUV campaign, which was launched with the Škoda Kodiaq, the manufacturer has invested approximately seven billion crowns into the location.

Over the next few years, the production capacity of the plant will steadily increase to 280,000 vehicles annually.

An additional 2600 employees had been added to the workforce by the end of 2016, and Škoda will be creating new jobs this year, as well.

The company is one of the largest industrial employers in the region.



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1515	CORSA EXCITE 1.4 5DR WATERWORLD BLUE 6,200 MILES		£8,995	£8,495	£500
1515	CORSA SE 1.4 AUTO 5DR WATERWORLD BLUE ONLY 540 MILES			£10,995	
1565	CORSA SE 1.4 5DR CARBON FLASH 10,700 MILES		£9,995	£9,495	£500
1565	CORSA SE 1.4 5DR ASTEROID GREY 12,500 MILES			£9,495	
1616	CORSA SE 1.4 5DR FLAME RED 7,400 MILES		£10,495	£9,995	£500
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1616	ZAFIRA TOURER ENERGY NAV 1.6CDTI 5DR WATERWORLD BLUE 7,700 MILES		£15,695	
1565	ZAFIRA TOURER SRI 1.6CDTI 5DR GREY 5,000 MILES NAV UPGRADE ALLOYS	£17,295	£16,795	£500
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Billy Palmer, Dominic Price and Henry Hardwick celebrate success



Training in the 'progressive' and 'safe' martial art



Students go through warm up exercises at Erasmus Darwin Academy



Sean Hardwick who runs the Cannock & Burntwood Taekwondo Club

Martial arts club fighting fit for nearly 20 years

SPORTING FEATURE

By Joe Edwards

CANNOCK & Burntwood Taekwondo Club is thriving at its nears 20 years in operation. The club, which operates from schools in Cannock and Burntwood, continues to provide a hub for training world-class athletes and beginners in the martial art.

Master Sean Hardwick has been running the club since 1997, putting on sessions for children and adults of all abilities at Cannock Chase High School and Erasmus Darwin Academy in Chasetown.

Hardwick, who has trained in several disciplines for over 40 years, said: "Taekwondo is quite a progressive martial art, and it's a safe art as well."

Earned

"I run adult classes and then do classes for children as well, going from beginners to those who are going to a lot of competitions."

He added: "A lot of martial arts clubs are dying out in this day and age but I reckon there are around 150 children I teach, and around 70 adults."

"When I started out, all I wanted to do was teach adults but you get more enrichment from teaching the children – it's really big for them and you get a massive boost from seeing them do well."

Now a sixth degree black belt, Hardwick got his first taste of martial arts when he took up judo.

He earned the grade of seventh kyu and had a brief period practising karate before moving on to boxing – he stayed at Wolverhampton ABA, based at Willenhall Road until 1984.

A year prior to leaving ABA he got involved with

"You get more enrichment from teaching the children – it's really big for them and you get a massive boost from seeing them do well."

taekwondo, and has never looked back. Judo was the first thing and it went through to taekwondo," said Hardwick. "I started taekwondo in Cannock back in 1983."

"I started competing internationally and then took the club over. When I took over, there were 17 students. It is very, very popular now."

"I am doing four lessons a night, four days a week and then it tends to be competitions over the weekend."

"I like to spread four sessions over one night and get them all there and involved. I have some assistant instructors who help me out with it all as well."

Hardwick runs sessions on four nights every week – Mondays and Wednesdays at Erasmus Darwin Academy, Pool Road, and Tuesdays and Thursdays at Cannock Chase High, Hednesford Road.

The nights are typically split into four different categories, with beginner classes for children running from 5.30 until 6.15pm.

An advanced class for children will then go until

7pm, with adults of a mixed ability then going through until 8pm. A session of extra sparring and training lasts until 8.30.

The club had a group of students find success on the big stage over the summer, with Billy Palmer, Dominic Price and Henry Hardwick – Sean's son – among those claiming medals at the TAGB World Championships.

The competition was held at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham and there were 3,700 competitors from more than 40 countries.

Palmer, aged 17, claimed gold medals in black belt middleweight sparring, individual and team.

Price, 11, also managed golds in yellow belt middleweight – both individual sparring – while Hardwick took silver in black belt heavyweight.

Progress

"Every single big tournament we have been at we have had world champions," said Hardwick. "The three lads who did so well at the last one have all been with me since the age of five, so I have seen them progress and work to become the top-class athletes they are now."

"Billy Palmer is 17 and we have got really high hopes for him. Of course, taekwondo is an Olympic sport so you could not rule it out – him being there one day."

"The next big competition is the British Championships at the Derby Velodrome and we have got plenty going down there and having a go."

Hardwick readily admits taekwondo is a huge part of his life and added: "My wife's a black belt, my children have black belts – it is very much a family thing."

For more information on the club, visit www.taekwondo.uk.net



Club members during sparring at Cannock & Burntwood Taekwondo Club, Erasmus Darwin Academy



Youngsters are put through their paces during the training sessions run by Sean Hardwick



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Eggington's in talks over title challenge

STOURBRIDGE'S Sam Eggington is set to be handed his next big title opportunity after being made the mandatory challenger for the European welterweight belt.

Eggington hinted at the chance on social media as his promoter Eddie Hearn bids to secure the chance for him in the new year.

He took to Twitter to say: "Just had some brilliant news! The new year is gonna bring big fights and big title."

The European Boxing Union have already ordered new champion Ceferino Rodriguez to defend against 'the Savage' and revealed both parties are in "private negotiations."

Rodriguez, who is co-promoted by former two-weight world champion Sergio Martinez, claimed the vacant strap on December 2.

Homeland

The 28-year-old defeated Frenchman Ahmed El Mousaoui on a points split decision in his homeland of Gran Canaria, Spain.

Hearn and his Matchroom Boxing team are hoping to get Eggington the fight on British soil, possibly even at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham. They plan to return there in the spring.

Eggington, aged 23, is back on track after claiming WBC International honours and the scalp of Brummie Frankie Gavin – a former European title challenger – by eighth round TKO in October.

The former British and Commonwealth titlist previously relinquished his belts when he was outpointed by Bradley Skeete in March.

Both fights took place in Birmingham, at the Genting Arena and Barclaycard respectively, with box office takings thought to be more favourable at the latter.

Dwyer comes full circle to join the Heathens revamp

CRADLEY Heathens have added Conor Dwyer as their latest new signing in a big team revamp.

Dwyer joins from hometown club Coventry on a 4.05 average and joins Tom Perry, Danny Ayres, Dan Greenwood, Joe Lawlor and Ryan Burton.

He admits he's always kept a keen interest in the club since spending time as part of their pit crew when he reformed.

"When I first got into speedway around 2010/11, I used to be mechanic for their former rider Richard Franklin," he said. "I used to look out at the crowds and think 'wow, I'd love to race in front of a crowd like that every week.'"

"Everything has come full circle since then and all these years on it's happened and I can't wait to get started."

He added: "Monmore Green is a track I really enjoy racing on and I have done so many laps because of the second halves after Wolves' Elite League meetings so I already know my way around there."

"I think it's going to be a big, exciting year for Cradley."

Will shows way to high-level success

A CRADLEY Heath student is celebrating an incredible year in which he played hockey at the highest level.

Will Hall, aged 17, of Rowley Regis, is a pupil at Ormiston Forge Academy and plays in goal. He began the year by being selected to attend an Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) Academy run by England Hockey in conjunction with Loughborough College.

He was also selected for assessment for the u-18 National Age Group Squads (NAGS), one of highest honours a junior hockey player can attain.

Based on observations and feedback from coaches, Will was invited to a development day

Hockey

with England Hockey. Being part of the squad gave the A-Level student access to high-performance coaching in team play, small unit play, set pieces, tournament play and individual technical coaching.

He was also given advice and training in nutrition, injury management, lifestyle, psychology and anti-doping.

As part of the u-18 squad, Will attended the Sainsbury School Games, held at Loughborough University in September as well as the 'Joint Re-

gional Performance Centre' trials, for a place in the Mercia regional team, to play in the competition. Will was selected to play for Mercia Lynx, one of the four regional teams in the Hockey Futures Cup. This is the selection process for the full England u-18 squad, which Will hopes to break into.

During the cup competition he played four halves of hockey and saved every penalty corner directed at him as well as a penalty stroke.

Ormiston Forge Academy principal Andrew Burns said: "We are all incredibly proud of Will. His achievements show how committed and talented he is."

IDEAL WARM-UP FOR CUP CLASH

Barwell 0 Stourbridge 1
STOURBRIDGE warmed up for their big FA Cup clash at Wycombe this weekend by stretching their unbeaten run to seven league matches.

Monday's 1-0 win over Barwell came courtesy of Jack Duggan, hero of the Glassboys' FA Cup second round win over Northampton Town.

The visitors had chances to extend their lead as the home side pushed for an equaliser, but the backline defended valiantly to hold on for a clean sheet.

Barwell came into the match in a good run of form themselves, having lost just one in their previous eight league matches.

Gary Hackett's men grew into the game after a sluggish start. Jordan Archer posed a threat with his pace running into the channels.

His good work in a wide position created the best chance of the half for Connor Gater, who cannoned his strike against the woodwork from the edge of the area.

Converted

The visitors eventually took the lead as Duggan converted from inside the six-yard box just minutes after the interval.

The centre-half brought down Matt Dodds' cross magnificently before finding the bottom corner with great composure.

After soaking up some pressure, the Glassboys became a threat on the counter-attack. Substitute Kayelden Brown twice missed the target before Archer forced a good save from Liam Castle.

The hosts had a couple of late chances but couldn't convert, as Stourbridge head into the match at Wycombe in perfect style.

The Glassboys were beaten by the weather when their game at Hedgesford Town was called off last Thursday due to a frozen Keys Park pitch.

On Boxing Day, the FA Cup heroes were shut-out by top-of-the-table Rushall Olympic at Amblecote.

The Pies' former Stourbridge striker Karl Hawley was sent off after lashing out at the Tom Tonks. Despite being down to 10 men, Rushall held firm.

Young Tigers earn their stripes



Instructor Hopeton Harmitt with his successful squad from Tipton Tigers Martial Arts

NINE young kickboxers from the Black Country have made five years of training pay off by picking up their coveted black belts.

The squad from Tipton Tigers Martial Arts, namely Jasmin Mae, Jack Prosser, Jessica Gwilliams, Travis McTaggart, Holly Eaton, Manesh Kaler, Charlie Rigby and brothers Aaron and Jeevan Chahal, are trained at the Great Bridge martial arts academy by Hopeton Harmitt, a 5th Dan black belt who is affectionately known as 'Coach' to his many students.

Throughout his 20-year career, Coach has trained more than 30 black belts, including national, European and World champions.

He said: "I am so proud of my students, what

a fantastic achievement for them all. Becoming a black belt takes countless hours of hard work and dedication and it's great to see such inspiring and hard-working youngsters."

Mr Harmitt added: "Two of my other students became ECKA Grand Prix Champions. They competed throughout the year against other students within ECKA clubs."

"Beginners classes are held every Tuesday and Thursday and I'd love to see the next generation of champions walking through the doors."

Tipton Tigers Martial Arts is located at 74 New Road, Great Bridge. Call 07810 348146 for more information.

Yeltz draw a blank as run is stretched

HALESOWEN have stretched their winless run to nine games, but will be disappointed to only draw a blank against bottom side Corby.

Yeltz were looking for their first league win in six on Friday night, but had to settle for their second successive goalless draw against a side with just 11 points prior to this encounter.

They will be more concerned, however, with the welfare of defender Louis Ezewe who was stretched off on just 20 minutes with a serious ankle break.

The Yeltz carved out the better chances, Tristan Dunkley shooting wide and then into the side netting in the first half and Kaiman Anderson taking one touch too many when through on goal.

Corby's only chance in this period came when Jordan Crawford got on the end of a Tyler Blake cross but shot over.

The second half was very scrappy, Corby missing a couple of chances, including when John Bateman in the Halesowen goal was forced into his first save.

Lee Chilton went close for Yeltz towards the end, curling a shot just over on 70 minutes and actually having the ball in the net three minutes from time but it was ruled offside.

Yeltz's first blank of the festive period came on Boxing Day, with an uninspiring stalemate against struggling Sutton Coldfield.

In a scrappy first half, home goalkeeper John Bateman kept out an early 25-yard free-kick from Sutton captain Danny O'Callaghan.

The Yeltz were unable to find the breakthrough in a drab second period that continued to lack quality.

Monday's game against Hedgesford Town was called off due to a frozen Keys Park pitch. They are at home to Buxton on Saturday.

DK runners trot off with festive turkey

ONLY a couple of DK runners took advantage of the poultry on offer before Christmas in Wolverhampton & Bilston AC's annual Turkey Trot, a five-mile race around the streets near their Aldersley Stadium home.

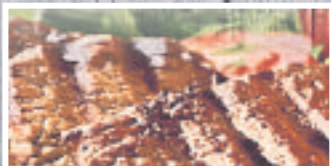
Each finisher was rewarded with a turkey – well a turkey product. Simon Blizzard came home for the blue hoops in 29th in 31.50 and Jacqui Elson-Whitaker took 109th place in 40.44.

It was good to see a former DK athlete, Malcolm Pillar, now representing South West Veterans, taking an age group prize in the MV70 category placing 82nd in a time of 37.14.

★★★

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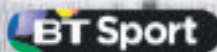


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EXCLUSIVE TO HALESOWEN MOTOR HOUSE



NU 66 REG

Suzuki Vitara 1.6 SZ4



Specification includes:

- LED Daytime Running Lights • DAB digital radio • Bluetooth®
- Remote central door locking • Cruise control • Air conditioning

£14,999

2.9% APR
Representative

Representative Example	
On the Road Price	£15,999.00
Deposit/Part Exchange	£2,400.00
Total Amount of Credit	£13,599.00
Purchase Fee (included in the payments below)	£10.00
Credit Facility Fee (included in the payments below)	£0.00
Total Amount Payable	£17,103.00
Initial Payment	£199.00
47 Monthly Payments	£199.00
Optional Final Payment	£5,151.00
Duration of Agreement	49 months
Interest Rate (fixed)	2.83%
Personal Contract Plan	

£500

**MINIMUM PART EXCHANGE
ON ALL NEW SUZUKIS
PLUS FREE SUZUKI MATS**

NU 66 REG

The New Suzuki S-Cross 1.0 Boosterjet SZ4

Specification includes:

- LED Daytime Running Lights • Cruise Control • ABS with Brake Assist Function
- DAB Digital Radio • Rear Parking Camera • Leather Steering Wheel

£15,999

2.9% APR
Representative



Representative Example	
On the Road Price	£14,999.00
Deposit/Part Exchange	£2,975.00
Total Amount of Credit	£12,024.00
Purchase Fee (included in the payments below)	£10.00
Credit Facility Fee (included in the payments below)	£0.00
Total Amount Payable	£16,051.72
Initial Payment	£149.64
47 Monthly Payments	£149.64
Optional Final Payment	£5,894.00
Duration of Agreement	49 months
Interest Rate (fixed)	2.84%
Personal Contract Plan	

Halesowen Motor House

Dudley Road, Halesowen B63 3NH. Tel: 0121 503 0001

GREAT OFFERS ACROSS THE SUZUKI RANGE
LOW DEPOSIT, LOW FINANCE* LOWEST PRICES
BEST PART-EXCHANGE PRICE FOR YOUR CAR

SEE MORE FANTASTIC NEW 66 REG OFFERS ONLINE AT: www.halesowenmotorhouse.co.uk

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). Vitara 1.6 SZ4: Urban: 44.8 (6.3), Extra-urban: 58.8 (4.8), Combined: 53.3 (5.3). CO2 emissions: 123g/km. # S-Cross 1.0: Urban: 49.5 (5.7), Extra-urban: 61.4 (4.6), Combined: 56.4 (5.0). CO2 emissions: 113g/km. #
*Fuel consumption information is official government environmental data, tested in accordance with the relevant EU directive. Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Correct at time of going to press.